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ABSTRACT

The first round of site visits to welfare-to-work programs in Texas examined the nature and degree of program coordination at three sites: El Paso, Houston, and San Antonio. A brief overview of the growing literature on program coordination paid particular attention to welfare-related studies. At the state level, evidence was found of increasing coordination efforts initiated by virtually all agencies and programs involved in delivering welfare-to-work services during the period before the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Program. The Governor's Office, the legislature, Departments of Human Services (DHS) and Commerce, Texas Employment Commission (TEC), Texas Education Agency, and the State Job Training Coordinating Council played substantive roles. Although the state-level initiatives had varying effects individually, as a whole they fostered an environment supportive of interagency coordination and collaboration. Interviews with local staff from the Job Training Partnership Act, DHS, and TEC sites focused on six program functions: planning, intake and eligibility determination, client assessment, case management, program services, and reporting and accountability. Of these six areas, coordination efforts were most visible in planning at all three sites. Evidence of coordinated activity in the other five functions varied greatly by site. (Appendixes include 32 references, interview guide, and list of interview participants.) (YLB)

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WELFARE-TO-WORK PROGRAM COORDINATION IN TEXAS

Report on the Initial Site Visits

First in a Series of Reports on
JTPA/Welfare Coordination Efforts

Prepared by
Annette Gula
Christopher T. King

December 1990

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We enjoyed remarkable cooperation from the staffs of these programs at the state and local level from the beginning of the project. Not only did they make themselves available for lengthy interviews during our visits, but most of them also managed to devote hours to reading and commenting on drafts sent to them. Appendix B contains a list of persons interviewed.

Finally, our colleagues at The University of Texas as always helped out in many ways. Rik Mackay, currently a Research Fellow at the Center and formerly Executive Director of the Alamo Private Industry Council in San Antonio, read and discussed the report with us and shared unique insights into the San Antonio portions. Bob McPherson, the Center's Associate Director, and Deanna Schexnayder, who shares lead responsibility for the project at the Bureau of Business Research, helped design the approach in the initial stages and commented on its findings. Amy Whitworth, Lindy Mings, and Cody Garrett assisted with project logistics and report production.

Executive Summary

At the direction of the Texas Legislature, researchers at The University of Texas at Austin are conducting an evaluation of efforts by Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs of the Texas Department of Commerce (Commerce) to coordinate with the Texas Department of Human Services (DHS) and other agencies in delivering employment and training services to Aid For Dependent Children (AFDC) caretakers during the period from 1985 to 1989. This evaluation will provide recommendations for enhanced program design and improved coordination between DHS, Commerce and other agencies implementing the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program in Texas. Research findings will be presented in a series of three interim reports with a final project report scheduled for completion in August 1991. This is the first of the interim reports and presents preliminary findings on coordination initiatives at the state level and also those observed at the local level during site visits.

For research purposes, coordination was defined as two or more organizations working together through formal or informal arrangements to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of programs. Coordination was viewed as occurring along a continuum. At one end of this continuum was the complete absence of coordinated activity, while at the opposite end, agencies were actually integrating program operations.

State-Level Findings

At the state level, there was evidence of increasing coordination efforts initiated by virtually all agencies and programs involved in delivering welfare-to-work services during the pre-JOBS period. The Governor's Office, the Legislature, Commerce, DHS, Texas Employment Commission (TEC), Texas Education Agency and the State Job Training Coordinating Council all played substantive roles. While the state-level initiatives have had varying effects individually, as a whole they have fostered an environment supportive of inter-agency coordination and collaboration. Viewed from the local level, these initiatives have served as role models encouraging and promoting the planning and operating of more inter-agency programs for AFDC caretakers. They have also served as catalysts for forging lasting relationships among the staff — executive-level and others — from the various agencies who carry the responsibility for policy and program implementation. They should also provide part of the foundation needed for successfully launching JOBS.

Local-Level Findings

Local site visits to El Paso, Houston and San Antonio sought to examine the nature and degree of coordination in welfare-to-work programs, not to explain the factors which have promoted or inhibited it. The findings reported here resulted from structured interviews with local staff from three key agencies: JTPA, DHS and TEC. Staff from other agencies were interviewed

at the discretion of the key agencies locally. The interviews at each site focussed on six program functions: planning, intake and eligibility determination, client assessment, case management, program services, and reporting and accountability. Of these six areas, coordination efforts were most visible in planning at all three sites. As for the remaining five program functions, evidence of coordinated activity varied greatly by site.

Since this report is based on field work in only three sites, the findings presented should be viewed as illustrative and insightful. They do not constitute a comprehensive evaluation of the three sites nor are they necessarily representative of coordination efforts underway in other areas of Texas.

El Paso. With the exception of education, El Paso's welfare-related programs were highly centralized. There was remarkable consensus among agencies and programs as to the basic mission of these efforts, facilitated to a great extent by the long-term continuity of key staff. El Paso appeared to have evolved into what has been referred to here as a *community of agencies* in so far as welfare-to-work efforts were concerned. The level of commitment and trust between programs was high, with a noticeable absence of politics and turf issues. Programs here have long pitched in on numerous coordinated initiatives of their own to make their limited resources stretch further and to deliver effective services for clients. In-depth assessment seemed to be the key. Coordination has become something staff just do as part of their day-to-day jobs.

Houston. Programs functioned in a far more decentralized setting in Houston with the notable exception of Project Independence 365, a joint JTPA/DHS initiative primarily serving highly-motivated AFDC caretakers. Houston presented a large, complex environment in every respect, making coordination and consensus-building difficult. Houston has developed a number of home-grown welfare initiatives — including I-365, several TEC projects and recent efforts in the schools. Welfare-to-work program coordination appeared to be going fairly well. To the extent that there were problems with coordination here, program staff ascribed them to bureaucratic rules and procedures imposed by the state. Houston is probably too large, too decentralized and too connected to developments in the rest of the state to attain the rarified sense of community enjoyed in El Paso.

San Antonio. Like Houston, the programmatic environment in San Antonio was very decentralized. At the time of the site visit, the prevailing atmosphere here was one of uncertainty and turmoil. There has been large-scale turnover in key positions in the major programs with detrimental effects on San Antonio's capacity to launch and effectively and consistently participate in collaborative efforts such as REFOCUS. Communication flow seemed to be stilted and uneven, and the underlying environment did not appear conducive to building mutual trust and commitment to collaborative programming. The tendency for now was largely towards own-agency not inter-agency effort. Even so, there were providers in San Antonio doing an excellent job of serving AFDC clients, but they seemed to be doing so more in spite of state and local efforts than because of them. San Antonio — along with Houston and Beaumont — served as learning labs for REFOCUS. Sites which implemented REFOCUS later had the full benefit of their successes and their failures.

Implications

The results of this research generate several implications of importance for policy makers, administrators, and agency staff associated with welfare-employment programs in general and more specifically, the implementation of JOBS. The following implications are offered:

- Mandating effective program coordination is impossible. Local programs can be directed to engage in activities associated with operating more effective and efficient welfare programs. The trick lies in determining which activities are associated with better programs and in implementing policies which will produce them.

- Policies on coordination should be sensitive to variations in local conditions. In areas which already have well coordinated programs and a foundation of mutual trust, requiring more specific coordination behaviors may be counterproductive; the best state policy in this case simply supports and nurtures what is already in place and stays well out of the way. In areas without such relationships, additional coordination activity might be directed and tracked over time. Positive reinforcement will typically produce better results than negative approaches.

- Program areas which may need greater attention generally include: the intake and referral process; client assessment; and program reporting and accountability.

- One of the critical factors affecting relationships in welfare-employment programs was the lack of resources, particularly on the DHS side. REFOCUS represented a sincere attempt to rationalize the process of sorting and referring AFDC clients to other programs. But, there were too few program staff — particularly case managers — to do the job. This will be an even bigger problem in future years.

- JOBS ultimately increases the ante for states (e.g., participation requirements, mandated transitional child care and Medicaid), making it much more important to operate effective welfare-to-work programs.

The second interim report, JTPA/Welfare Coordination Evaluation: Baseline Analysis, will be available in early 1991. It will be based on extensive statistical analysis of DHS, JTPA and TEC program records, including data from TEC's UI Wage Records files covering participants' employment and earnings. It will provide state and local area findings on welfare spells and duration, as well as on labor market outcomes from these programs.

I. Introduction

A. Project Origins

In recent years, there has been growing concern with coordination among publicly-funded programs. This has taken many different forms, including numerous efforts to examine the nature and degree of coordination and to explain the factors affecting it. These studies have been conducted largely on a national scope in the 1980s for such efforts as vocational education and for job training. But, nowhere has this concern with coordination been greater than in programs which are designed to move welfare recipients off the rolls and into unsubsidized employment.[1] As public budgets — national and state — have grown ever tighter, the level of concern has increased and the frequency and intensity with which it has been expressed have also grown.

In Texas, a number of programs target welfare recipients directly or indirectly for services designed to enhance their education and skill levels and to move them into unsubsidized employment. These include: employment services provided by the Texas Employment Commission (TEC); job training offered through local programs funded by the Texas Department of Commerce (Commerce) as part of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA); vocational education which is overseen at the state level by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) at the secondary level and the Higher Education Coordinating Board at the postsecondary level; and those efforts operated directly by the Texas Department of Human Services (DHS). Each program has its own master, structure and set of legislative and regulatory requirements. Reporting varies widely among them in terms of frequency, level of detail, and any number of other dimensions, making it difficult for policymakers and program administrators to determine the nature of program interrelationships, not to mention their results.

Researchers at the Center for the Study of Human Resources and the Bureau of Business Research of the University of Texas at Austin have invested considerable time and energy over the past five years in understanding and developing cross-program data bases which support the analysis of participation in and outcomes from these programs. They have produced reports examining Texas postsecondary vocational education, JTPA, Employment Services (ES) and

[1]The most recent of these have been produced by teams of researchers at the Urban Institute. See: Nightingale and Burbridge (1987); Burbridge and Nightingale (1989); and an earlier one concerning the preceding Work Incentive (WIN) programs by Mitchell, Chadwin and Nightingale (1980).

welfare-to-work initiatives, including an evaluation of the State's readiness for implementing the 1988 Family Support Act's Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) training program.[2]

During and in preparation for the most recently completed regular session of the Texas Legislature in 1989, oversight hearings were conducted to examine the performance of some of these programs and to elicit information about the nature and degree of program coordination among them at the state and local level. The desire to know more about these program relationships and their potential for producing more effective outcomes for Texas welfare recipients, as well as the difficulty involved in obtaining such information, led the Texas Legislature to add a "rider" to Commerce's appropriation for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 1990-1991. Commerce was directed to contract with the University for an evaluation of public and private coordination efforts affecting the delivery of job training services to recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), especially those targeted for services under JOBS. The project was initiated in October 1989 and will run through late 1991.

B. Key Project Components

This project has two major research components: field work to document the nature of local coordination in these programs; and data analysis to determine the impact of coordination on key outcomes for welfare recipients participating in them. Researchers will be visiting selected local sites throughout Texas interviewing program administrators and staff and collecting reports and other materials to document both the nature and extent of coordination among key programs designed to move AFDC recipients towards self sufficiency. The current plan calls for several rounds of field work with a mix of intensive and extensive on-site interviews. The first of these rounds on which this report is based took place in May 1990 with on-site interviews conducted in El Paso, San Antonio and Houston.

To conduct the data analysis component of this project, researchers will be assembling an extensive, individual-level data base with several years of data drawn from JTPA, ES and welfare program files, matched to longitudinal employment and earnings files maintained by TEC as part of the Unemployment Insurance (UI) system. These data will be augmented with local population and economic information from various sources maintained by the Bureau of Business Research and with data developed as part of the project's field work on local program coordination. The

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[2]For example, see: King and Schexnayder (March and November 1988); and Schexnayder, King and Ambrosino (1989).

analysis will result in revised estimates of welfare (AFDC) spells and duration, the establishment of program performance benchmarks based on the pre-coordination period in the state, the identification of factors contributing to effective coordination and successful longer-term participant outcomes, especially increased employment and earnings and reduced welfare recidivism. The first analysis report concerning welfare spells and duration and performance benchmarks for the pre-coordination period will be produced in November 1990.

This project addresses two main questions:

- To what extent are Texas job training, welfare and related programs coordinated at the local level? A subquestion is: how has the nature and degree of coordination changed over the period of concern, i.e., the 1985-1989 period?

- How have changes in the nature and degree of coordination among these programs affected participants' program outcomes, especially their employment, earnings and welfare recidivism?

Field surveys can provide information to answer the first question directly and can contribute some of the data necessary for answering the second. It is important to note that this project is much less concerned with analyzing the factors affecting coordination in welfare-to-work programs in Texas than it is with documenting the nature and degree of such coordination and measuring its effects on program efficiency and effectiveness. Insights into the forces promoting or inhibiting program coordination will be of interest but are not the primary focus of the research.

C. Report Content: Initial Report on Program Coordination

This report is the first in a series examining and documenting coordination locally among the various programs targeted on AFDC recipients and designed at least in part to move them from a state of dependency on welfare towards self sufficiency. It presents findings based on structured interviews conducted with program staff in May 1990 in three local areas: El Paso, Houston and San Antonio. The report examines the nature and degree of coordination in welfare-to-work programs in each of these areas. It does not attempt to explain the factors which have either promoted or inhibited it. It should be pointed out that, since the report is based on field work in only three sites, the findings presented should be viewed as illustrative and insightful. They are not necessarily representative of coordination efforts underway in other areas of Texas or in welfare-to-work programs in other states.

This report is organized into six sections. Following this introduction, Section II provides a brief overview of the growing literature on program coordination with particular attention to welfare-related studies. Recent research is emphasized. In section III, the methodology is described, and the process for selecting the three areas is presented. Section IV provides an overview of welfare-to-work coordination initiatives in Texas largely focussing on the 1985 to 1989 period. The period is basically structured to capture most of the meaningful, recent coordination efforts, ending as the planning for JOBS begins in earnest. Special attention is given to describing the DHS REFOCUS initiative in this section. Section V presents the findings from the initial visits to El Paso, Houston and San Antonio. Key findings from the first round of site visits are summarized and their implications explored in Section VI.

II. Program Coordination: Overview

A. Coordination Defined

Before reviewing the findings from the literature on coordination, it is helpful to present a working definition of coordination to set the stage for what follows. Many alternate definitions are available, each with its own particular point of view. Controversy and debate have accompanied most of them. One recent review of programs for welfare recipients anticipating possible relationships between JTPA and JOBS simply opted to discard the baggage associated with discussions of coordination in favor of an approach using the term collaboration.[3] The definition selected for use in this project has the advantage of being concise while covering the more important bases. Coordination is simply defined here as:

> Two or more organizations working together through formal or informal arrangements to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of programs.[4]

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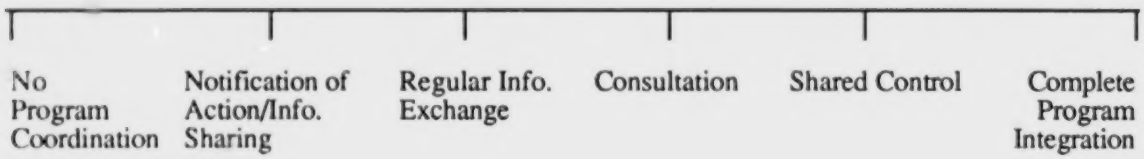
[3]U.S. Department of Labor (July 1989).

[4]This definition is a shortened form of the definition found in Trutko, Bailis and Barnow (1989).

B. The Coordination Literature: Key Findings

The coordination literature has grown alongside the proliferation of programs designed to serve the various target populations. Key findings from this literature are presented here. Coordination behavior basically can be thought of as occurring along a continuum.[5] At one end of the continuum is the complete absence of coordinated activity. Not only are the programs working independently at this end of the continuum, but they are even refraining from sharing information about their activities. Near the mid-point are those programs in which information is shared and managers and administrators regularly consult each other on everything from the planning of new programs to program accountability. At the far end, programs have moved beyond sharing control and jointly participating in activities to actually integrating program operations. This continuum can be represented as follows:



It is also useful to think of coordination as having several dimensions, with the extent of coordination varying along them:

- Top-Down/Bottom-Up Coordination: whether coordination is being imposed/encouraged by federal or state officials or initiated by local program administrators; this dimension — unlike the other two — is a vertical rather than a horizontal one;
- Broad-/Narrow-Scope Coordination: in terms of the number of independent agencies participating;
- Degree of Integration: efforts with agency budgets and lines of authority untouched versus those with funding and staff responsibility fully shared or pooled.[6]

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[5]This is an expanded version of the continuum in Van Horn, et al (1983). Bailis (1989) has recently conducted a comprehensive review of the coordination literature.

[6]Trutko et al (1989). This last dimension has been incorporated directly into the coordination continuum here.

Two alternative metaphors for coordination have been suggested recently in a seven-state study of exemplary coordination between vocational education and job training programs: competition and redundancy.[7] The competition metaphor has its origins in the economics discipline and is tied to market-based concepts. It suggests that public programs may in fact produce greater efficiency and effectiveness under the right conditions even though there may appear to be duplication of services. The redundancy metaphor is taken from the engineering notion that, where the cost associated with failure of the primary system may be quite high, it is important to provide for back-up or redundant systems. Here, public schools, higher education and vocational education might be seen as the key primary training systems. Remedial programs in public schools, community colleges and adult education might be viewed as secondary systems, JTPA as tertiary and welfare employment and training as quadrary systems in this view. Basically, all but the primary systems offer some duplication of services for welfare and other target populations, yet it is clear that the high costs of not having redundant systems justifies them.

The approach to measuring coordination has varied among these studies. Most researchers have relied on site interviews with program staff at various levels. Some have approached the task with loosely- or semi-structured instruments, letting informal discussions with staff and checklists shape their impressions of the nature and extent of coordination.[8] Others — most notably the various Urban Institute projects over the years — have taken a more structured approach in their research, attempting to document coordination behavior in a more quantitative fashion.[9] Both approaches have generated useful information and insights into coordination phenomena and have contributed productively to shaping program practice and public policy improvements. The crux of both the more informal and the structured efforts has been the use of informed — seasoned may be a better word — observers for the actual field work supporting the analysis. Observers and analysts have often been one and the same.

From this literature, it is possible to indicate the factors generally associated with both promoting and inhibiting program coordination. Table 1 summarizes the factors affecting program coordination by whether their effect is either to promote or to inhibit coordination. In both cases, the factors marked with an asterisk (*) are the ones typically singled out for emphasis as being

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[7]Grubb et al (1989).

[8]Van Horn et al (1983) is in this group, as is Trutko et al (1989).

[9]See: Mitchell et al (1980); Burbridge and Nightingale (1989); and Nightingale and Burbridge (1987). The Urban Institute's approach has taken its lead methodologically from the earlier work by Van de Ven and Ferry (1980) on "organizational assessment." Also, Bailis (1984, 1987) conducted studies of coordination under both JTPA and pre-JTPA programs operated under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act for the National Commission for Employment Policy.

most common or most important in the studies. Coordination seems to be affected asymmetrically by these factors: it is inherently much easier to inhibit efforts to coordinate than it is to promote them. It takes a great deal of time and effort invested by many individuals from different programs to achieve and sustain high coordination levels. However, a few strategically-placed, turf-oriented individuals can bring such efforts to a halt.

Table 1
Factors Affecting Program Coordination

Promoting Factors	Inhibiting Factors
•Program funding decreases/shortages (*)	•Bureaucratic turf protection (*)
•Availability of new funds earmarked for coordination (*)	•Differences in perspectives on performance and client services (*)
•High-level political support	•Ignorance or dislike of the philosophy or operations of other agencies
•Cooperative managerial/staff attitudes at the state and local level	•Legal issues, including eligibility restrictions, restrictions on use of funds, and client confidentiality requirements
•Mutual needs and common goals of agencies, particularly those related to effectively serving clients	•Administrative/governance system barriers, including the inability to get credit for results, difficulty in working with other agency staff, geographic boundaries, incompatible forms and information systems, incompatible procedures, long-term leases and lines of authority
•Strength of personalities in key positions	•Differences in financing mechanisms
•Federal legislative and/or regulatory requirements	•Differences in the types of services provided
•Previous history of coordination	•Differences in performance measures/ expectations
•Mechanisms to build consensus and resolve conflicts arising during the planning and implementation of coordination efforts	•Fears of losing agency autonomy and/or functions
•Others, including co-location of facilities/staff and evidence of effective performance	•Others, lack of ownership, lack of political/administrative support, and time and effort required

III. Field Methodology and Site Selection

A. Field Methodology

The approach used in the initial round of field work for this project has relied heavily on the "organizational assessment" methodology developed by Van de Ven and Ferry and refined at the Urban Institute, as well as on earlier research on welfare-to-work programs at the University of Texas.[10] The decision to make use of the more structured approach to examining coordination follows in large part from the desire to factor measures of coordination into the data analysis at later stages of the research.

Briefly, the following are the key elements in the approach to the field work:

- Extensive review of existing program documents (e.g., MIS reports, plans, referral forms) at the state and local level;
- Development and application of a structured interview guide — based on the latest research on coordination in welfare-to-work and other programs — to be used in interviews with key actors and staff from JTPA, DHS, TEC and education programs in the regions and local areas of interest.
- Use of the interview guide by informed (seasoned) observers who visit selected sites, conduct interviews, perform the analysis and prepare the reports.

The interview guide used for the site visits contained questions on a number of broad topics, including: program goals and objectives; planning; administration, organization and staffing; client flow and sequencing of activities; target populations; reporting and others. Appendix A contains a summary of the Texas JTPA/Welfare Coordination Interview Guide, listing the key topics covered. Both quantitative and qualitative information was collected from the interviewees, reinforced by supporting documents when available. Decisions about who was to be interviewed were left to be made by lead staff in each of the agencies at the state and local level.

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[10]For the approach used by University of Texas researchers in earlier studies, see King and Schexnayder (March 1988).

B. Site Selection

The purpose of the initial round of site visits was not to provide a comprehensive picture of coordination among these programs locally. Nor was it to be fully representative of the universe of coordination efforts in welfare-to-work programs. Instead, these visits were intended to provide useful information to policymakers and program planners in their preparations for implementing JOBS in Texas and to yield insights which could enrich later rounds of field work and help to shape the analysis. Thus, site selection for the initial round of visits was purposeful not random. The findings from these visits are illustrative not representative.

The criteria used to select the initial sites were as follows:

- Early involvement in REFOCUS, the most significant statewide, welfare coordination effort initiated by DHS; or
- Known coordination efforts locally whether or not associated with REFOCUS; and
- Willingness and availability of key program actors in the sites to participate in extensive interviews with the researchers.

Based on these criteria, El Paso, Houston and San Antonio were selected for the initial round of visits. (Detailed profiles of each of these areas are provided in Section V.) El Paso has had a history of involvement in welfare and related demonstration projects and enjoys a reputation among policymakers and program administrators as operating well-coordinated, effective programs for welfare recipients.[11] Both Houston and San Antonio were pilot areas for the DHS REFOCUS program initiative, the Refocused Employment Services Program as it was known initially in late 1987 and early 1988. Researchers contacted key actors from the various programs — welfare, job training, job placement and education — at the state and local level before actually scheduling interviews to make sure they would be willing participants in the study. Each state agency provided notification to its respective system about the project.

Finally, it should be pointed out that, while the sites were not selected to be fully representative of the universe of coordination efforts, they do offer a welfare recipient pool which

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[11]Earlier research by King and Schexnayder (November 1988) indicated that the Upper Rio Grande JTPA program, despite being located in one of the lower wage/high unemployment labor markets in the state, produced longer-term outcomes (employment and earnings) for welfare participants well above the state medians.

is fairly representative in terms of the demographics of the Texas welfare caseload. For example, in terms of race/ethnicity, the state AFDC caretaker population — including mandatory youth in the count — is approximately 24 percent white, 38 percent black, 37 percent Hispanic and one percent other. Based on Metropolitan Statistical Area-level figures, the combined caseload in the three sites is about 17 percent white, 42 percent black, 40 percent Hispanic and one percent other. The sites selected do have the drawback that they provide a decidedly urban picture. About four-fifths of Texas AFDC caretakers reside in metropolitan areas (i.e., in 49 out of the 254 counties in the state); fully a third live in the three counties which are the focus of this report. Rural concerns will be dealt with more fully in subsequent site visits.

C. Site Visit Timing

Several points should be made about the timing of these initial interviews. First, as the interviews were being conducted in May 1990, the local planning for the implementation of JOBS was just beginning in earnest. Unlike earlier state welfare-to-work initiatives, JOBS planning is being done through a tops-down/bottoms-up, multi-agency process explicitly designed to bring all the key program actors to the table from the outset. The process is steered by an Interagency Planning Group (IPG) at the state-level, chaired by DHS. In each of the sites, numerous committees and subcommittees, comprised of representatives from DHS, JTPA, TEC and other agencies, were meeting in order to produce each area's Local JOBS Plan which was due to the state DHS office in late July 1990. Local welfare coordination activity was high as a result.

Second, the nature of the JOBS program as it will be operating in Texas is likely to entail significantly broader and deeper coordination than have previous efforts. This results from federal legislative and regulatory provisions and the implementation approach chosen by the state in light of the very serious resource constraints: without significant state general revenue dedicated to education, employment and/or training, DHS' only hope for meeting JOBS program requirements is to coordinate far more with those other programs serving their clients, especially JTPA. Thus, current and future coordination in most local welfare-to-work programs in Texas is likely to be increasing relative to activities identified in this report.

IV. Texas JTPA/Welfare Coordination Initiatives

A. Project Time Period: The Immediate Pre-JOBS Period

This project examines coordination activity in Texas welfare-to-work programs largely in the period 1985 to 1989 in what might be thought of as the immediate pre-JOBS period. This period was chosen for a number of reasons. First, the situation in Texas in 1990 was rapidly changing as key actors in the various programs at the state and local level geared up for JOBS implementation. Thus, it was decided to examine coordination efforts which preceded JOBS and the intensive planning for it. A related reason for ending the study period prior to JOBS planning and implementation is that the researchers intend to measure the impact of moving to more coordinated welfare-to-work programs on numerous near- and longer-term outcomes. This necessitates allowing for sufficient time to pass to gather postprogram data on such outcomes as employment and earnings, including time to conduct the analysis. Utilizing information from the early stages of JOBS would preclude this.

The rationale for only looking at coordination since 1985 is two-fold. On the one hand, it is difficult to develop detailed and reliable information on program coordination in periods much earlier than the mid-1980s. Documents are difficult to locate, and key program actors either have left for other jobs or cannot easily recall detailed events in the more distant past, making it nearly impossible to recreate the situations that existed at the time. More importantly, from available documents and discussions with staff from the agencies and the researchers knowledge of the earlier period, it is clear that concerted efforts to promote more effective welfare-to-work coordination on a statewide basis largely began in the latter part of the decade. There was significant substate coordination activity earlier than 1985 to be sure (e.g., El Paso), but across-the-board, statewide efforts were not in evidence until later.

B. Major State-Initiated Coordination Efforts

There were a number of state-initiated, welfare-to-work coordination efforts in the 1985-1989 period. These varied considerably in origins, initiating agencies and scope, among other things. The initiatives described briefly here are listed in chronological order, not in terms of their importance or possible impact. Table 2 provides a summary chronology of these initiatives.

Table 2
Chronology of Welfare-to-Work
Coordination Initiatives in Texas, 1985-1989

Date	Coordination Initiative
1985	JTPA/DHS Coordination Agreement
1985	Teen Parent Initiative
1986	Corporate Coordination Model Projects
1987	JTPA/AFDC Enhancement Projects
1987	JTPA/DHS/TEC Coordination Conferences
1987	Mandatory DHS Private Industry Council Representation
1987	Texas Literacy Council
1988	DHS REFOCUS Initiative
1988	AFDC Job Search Workshops
1989	Joint JTPA/AFDC Eligibility and Referral Policy
1989	DHS/Coordinating Board Educational Broker Pilot Projects
1989	DHS/TEC UI Wage Records Access Project
1989	TEC Case Management
1989	AFDC Adult Education Expansion

JTPA/DHS Coordination Agreements. In late 1985 after months of discussion and negotiation, DHS and the Texas Department of Community Affairs (TDCA) as the then-state administrative entity for JTPA, signed a state-level non-financial coordination agreement. This agreement, and the ones signed in each succeeding year, encouraged similar agreements between local PICs and DHS offices, promoted interagency data sharing, and established income disregard guidelines for eligibility determination, among other things. The initial agreement was implemented late in PY1985 and led to similar action in most SDAs subsequently.

Teen Parent Initiative. Representatives from TDCA, DHS, TEA and the Texas Department of Health met in 1985 to discuss and attempt to address the problem of teen pregnancy in Texas.[12] These discussions evolved into the Teen Parent Initiative launched in September 1985 to promote self-sufficiency of pregnant teens, teen parents and teens at risk of becoming parents too soon. The Interagency Council expanded informally to include participation by other state agencies, including the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, the Health and Human Services Coordinating Council, the Texas Youth Commission (TYC) and the Texas Department of Agriculture (Agriculture). The Texas Legislature officially designated DHS as the lead agency for the initiative in 1987 and directed it to establish a statewide clearinghouse for teen pregnancy information and an Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenthood Advisory Committee to assist DHS in making policy and program decisions in this area.

The first-year efforts of the initiative focussed on coordination and information sharing among these agencies and led to the creation of two pilot projects in late 1985: Project Redirection in El Paso and Project TEAM (Training and Employment for Adolescent Mothers) in Houston. These were conceived as five-year projects and each was funded at least partially by DHS. Each was required to develop a comprehensive program of services for teen parents which included education health care, family planning, employment training, child care and other services. Since these projects are located in two of the sites selected for this study, the projects' details are provided in site-specific sections. Presently, Project Redirection continues operations, while TEAM — which survived for a while as part of the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation's 18-month New Chance Demonstration — ceased to operate at the end of the summer of 1988 when its host, the Urban Affairs Corporation, ran into severe financial difficulty. The most recent annual report on the pilots concluded, among other findings, that:

- such programs needed to offer a comprehensive array of services;

[12]For more detail, see the third-year DHS report on the Teen Parent Initiative, DHS (1989).

- a single entity should be responsible for planning the program and coordinating the services;
- strong case management was required, regardless of the program model; and
- the teen parent population contained at least five distinct age/education subgroups and that programs needed to be tailored accordingly.[13]

Corporate Coordination Model Projects. Also in late 1985, the Governor directed his office and the staff at TDCA to begin working with other state agencies, including DHS and TEC, to prepare a series of welfare-to-work program options.[14] These options were refined and presented to the Texas State Job Training Coordinating Council (SJTCC) in early 1986. The SJTCC recommended that the governor proceed with the implementation of the Governor's Corporate Coordination Model Projects immediately, relying primarily on JTPA funding but using some Wagner-Peyser 7b funds from TEC as well. These projects were to be Phase Two of a three-phase initiative, where Phase One referred to a collection of existing efforts including the JTPA/DHS agreement and two locally-based projects for teen parents (in Houston and El Paso). Phase Three, which began but was suspended in mid-1987 with the change in administration, was to have been a longer-term effort, led by the SJTCC and its Advisory Panel on Work and Welfare, to evaluate the Corporate Model Projects and to develop more comprehensive program designs based upon an extensive analysis of the experiences of other states and localities.

Following considerable work by an interagency workgroup, chaired by Governor's Office staff, designing the model and publicizing the initiative, the Corporate Model Projects began operations in two sites in PY1986: Austin (in September 1986) and the City of Dallas (in early 1987). The model was to provide training to AFDC recipients to enable them to obtain employment with corporations which provided: wages above the minimum; employee benefits for both caretakers and their dependents; and opportunities for career advancement. Key model components included: customized training to meet corporate specifications, in-depth assessment, pre-employment classes, basic skills remediation, OJT and support services, particularly child care. The design emphasized partnerships between the PIC, local corporations and the local welfare office. The ultimate disposition of these projects, both in terms of participant outcomes and in terms of continued operations within the SDAs' regular programming, remains unclear. With the change in administrations and the administrative reorganization of the JTPA program at

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[13]DHS (1989), p. 3.

[14]This description is based on King and Schexnayder (December 1988) and accompanying project field notes.

the state level, the projects apparently lost their identity as special initiatives sometime in late 1987 or certainly early 1988. Increased coordination between key players at the state and local level very likely occurred in the short run at least.

JTPA/AFDC Enhancement Projects. In the spring of 1987 (i.e., late PY1986), TDCA funded a series of projects using Title IIA Six Percent funds as part of a hard-to-serve initiative. These projects, designed to enhance services to AFDC recipients in ways determined locally, were funded in 14 of the 34 SDAs in PY 1986 and an additional 18 SDAs in PY 1987. Unfortunately, program records pertaining to these projects appear to have been lost. Moreover, unlike participants in the Corporate Model Projects for whom a special MIS code was assigned, participants in these projects were not separately identified and cannot be tracked. Examination of SDA program plans, annual reports, proceedings of the SJTCC, and discussions with state JTPA staff, suggest that these projects either were discontinued sometime in 1988 or were integrated into the SDAs' regular Title IIA operations.[15] In any event, it is apparent that little can be learned about the details of these projects or their impact on regular programs or the participants themselves.

The general sense is that the enhancement projects had only minimal effects if any, with one notable exception. Partly as a result of these efforts to boost AFDC participation in JTPA using the hard-to-serve provisions, TDCA/Commerce ultimately prepared SDA-specific AFDC participation goals for Title IIA programs. These were first implemented in PY1988 and have remained part of the regular JTPA Title IIA planning process in subsequent years.

JTPA/DHS/TEC Coordination Conferences. In May 1987, TDCA, DHS and TEC jointly sponsored a "Partnership for Self-Sufficiency Conference" focussing on welfare-to-work program coordination which included staffs from the key state agencies (i.e., TDCA, DHS, TEC, TEA and the Coordinating Board), as well as from DHS Regional Offices and all 34 SDAs. This conference was one of the first major efforts to share policy and program information on welfare-oriented programs in which staff at all levels were brought together from the various agencies in a joint session. Formal presentations as well as more informal question and answer sessions were part of the conference format. Joint coordination conferences were subsequently held in sixteen sites, funded through JTPA but with active participation by the other agencies. These conferences were managed by the University of North Texas and featured presentations by local agency staffs.

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[15]The November 1987 SJTCC package states: "It was decided by TEDD Administration to fund the [18] AFDC enhancement projects at a level of $30,000 each for a total of $540,000" (p. 179). Funding was from a combination of $320,000 in PY1986 deobligated 8 Percent Administrative and $220,000 in PY1987 Six Percent funds.

Mandatory DHS PIC Representation. In the 70th session of the Texas Legislature, S.B. 298 was introduced by Senator Chet Edwards amending Section 7(d) of the Texas JTPA Act of 1983 to require that all PICs in the state include area representatives from DHS. It also amended Section 8(b) of that act to require the SJTCC to assist PICs in developing programs to serve AFDC recipients. This provision became effective in September 1987, although it was well into PY1988 before the last of the 34 PICs came into full, technical compliance with Section 7(d).[16]

The DHS PIC members have been a varied group. Some are Regional Administrators at the very top of the DHS Regional Office hierarchy, while others are Local Office managers or Regional Directors for Client Self-Support (CSS) or even simply CSS Workers. However, it seems likely that the addition of these representatives has resulted in more effective day-to-day coordination at least in the planning of local JTPA programs for welfare recipients.[17] DHS has been represented on the Texas SJTCC since 1985. Until 1987, the DHS Commissioner was on the Council. Since mid-1987, the DHS Board Chair has served as an active SJTCC member.

Texas Literacy Council. Another initiative with implications for coordinated services for welfare recipients is the Texas Literacy Council. The Council was established by the 70th Texas Legislature in 1987 under Senate Concurrent Resolution 48 as a result of considerable efforts by Janey Lack, the Chair, and other members of the Governor's Task Force on Literacy which had been established by Governor White in mid-1986.[18] The Council's goals include providing assistance to local literacy groups, serving as a state coordinator in planning and implementing literacy policy and developing a five-year strategic plan for literacy efforts in Texas.[19]

The Texas Literacy Council got off to a slow start in 1987 and spent most of its first year developing a system of support for literacy volunteers in the field, including developing a database and registry of known literacy service providers in the state (September 1988) and creating the Texas Literacy Hotline (July 1988). In addition, volunteer tutor training workshops were held in four areas, leading to the establishment of new literacy councils in these localities. The Council's activities ceased during the first half of 1989 due to the expiration of its authority. It was re-

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[16]The Middle Rio Grande SDA had had a DHS person on the PIC for some time, but in his capacity as a private businessman, not as a DHS representative. In the spring of 1989, this situation was remedied when the person underwent a status change on the PIC.

[17]JTPA staff at the state and local level complain about the lack of symmetry in this legislative requirement: JTPA must work with DHS to plan local programs, yet there has not been a similar requirement on the DHS side. DHS staff point out that JTPA actors at the state and local level have been actively involved in DHS planning for their employment and related programs through a variety of mechanisms, including membership on the CSS Advisory Council which provides recommendations to the DHS Board, as well as their Child Care Committee.

[18]See: Task Force on Literacy (1987). The Task Force functioned as an adjunct to the Texas SJTCC.

[19]See: Texas Department of Commerce (1989), p. 14.

established as an advisory body within the Texas Department of Commerce with the signing of H.B. 1888 in mid-1989. While there is considerable overlap between the pool of AFDC caretakers and the Council's target population — adult Texans who cannot read, write or perform basic math skills well enough to perform in the modern workplace — it is unclear to what extent their activities have actually addressed caretakers in practice. The Council's target population is estimated to represent around 20 percent of the state's adults.

REFOCUS. The most significant statewide coordination initiative affecting welfare-to-work programs in the pre-JOBS period has been REFOCUS, a DHS-initiated effort which was begun as a series of pilot projects in Regions 9 (San Antonio), 10 (Beaumont) and 11 (Houston).[20] The initiative was the result of intensive planning throughout 1987 by an internal DHS workgroup, as well as the contributions of a DHS state/regional implementation task force in late 1987 and early 1988. Each DHS pilot region planned and implemented the program in its own way within parameters provided by the DHS state office. The program then expanded beyond the three pilot programs beginning operations in Region 3/12 (Midland/El Paso) in February 1989, in Region 5 (Dallas) in March 1989 and in Region 7 (Paris) in northeast Texas in April 1989. Implementation in the four remaining regions was completed in December 1989.

REFOCUS entails more careful allocation of limited DHS program resources — especially Family Support Services (FSS) program staff, intensive casework with defined groups of clients, greater client orientation generally, increased use of existing community resources, and greater coordination with programs such as JTPA, TEC and TEA. The details of the REFOCUS program, including a description of the typical client flow, are provided in the section which follows.

AFDC Job Search Workshops. In mid-1988, TEC initiated a series of Job Search Workshops for Category I AFDC clients, based on the Karli System approach to job search assistance modified to work with TEC's own curriculum for job search.[21] Note that some Category II clients get referred and served in these workshops. The impetus for this initiative, which relies on Wagner-Peyser 7b (Governor's Discretionary) funds, was at the state level with little regional or local input. It involved a series of actors, including the Governor's Office, DHS, TEC and the SJTCC. These workshops now have incorporated the Computer Curriculum Corporation (CCC) into their program in some locations, enabling TEC to make use of JTPA-funded support services for participating clients. Initially, this initiative was funded as a six-month

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[20]This discussion and the one in the following section draw heavily on Schexnayder, King and Ambrosino (1989). DHS (1989) contains a detailed discussion of REFOCUS and its first-year results.

[21]Karli and Associates developed and marketed materials (such as videotapes) for conducting job search workshops in the early 1980s. These have seen widespread use in TEC's Job Search Seminars and AFDC Job Search Workshops.

project (from July to December 1988) in the three REFOCUS pilot regions. However, it was later extended and expanded into three other regions, and the SJTCC recently recommended and the governor approved continuation of these projects through PY1990, still using 7b funds.[22]

Joint JTPA/AFDC Eligibility and Referral Policy. After debating the issue of AFDC eligibility for JTPA programs for almost six years, in August 1989 the Texas SJTCC recommended and the governor approved a joint eligibility and referral policy for AFDC (and Food Stamp) recipients throughout the state.[23] This policy included a joint referral form (DHS Form 2738), joint interagency training on the use of the form, which replaces all JTPA documentation for participants' citizenship, birth date and residency. The form was intended to expedite AFDC and Food Stamp client referral to and participation in JTPA, as well as to eliminate the need for clients to obtain any additional documentation as a condition of JTPA enrollment. The form was officially transmitted to SDAs in early 1990 and is expected to be in widespread use well before JOBS is implemented in October 1990. DHS adopted the form much earlier, incorporating it into its Direct Delivery Handbook for regional and local office use in June 1988.

Finally, several additional coordination initiatives merit at least a brief mention, despite the fact that they were either begun late in 1989 or were only expected to affect welfare-to-work program operations in 1990. These four interagency initiatives, involving DHS, the Coordinating Board, TEC and TEA, are described briefly below, again listed in chronological order.

DHS/Coordinating Board Educational Broker Pilots. DHS and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board began another joint effort, using $150,000 in federal funding under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, to establish education broker pilot projects for REFOCUS clients in three areas. Projects started up in late 1989 (with PY 1990 monies) at Texarkana College, Dallas County Community College and El Paso Community College. All three projects were designed to accept Category II REFOCUS referrals from DHS offices, providing them with opportunities for vocational counseling, survival skills training and the capacity for accessing other education and training assistance (e.g., ABE, JTPA, etc.). The El Paso project also focussed explicitly on helping the Category III REFOCUS clients who had less than an 8th grade education and were in need of basic skills remediation and other services. Only El Paso Community College received continued funding in PY 1991.[24] Their current project will continue

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[22]TEC Job Search Seminars for AFDC Recipients are now operating in the following DHS regions: Houston, Beaumont, San Antonio, Dallas, Paris and El Paso. Through PY 1989, more than 1,100 recipients were enrolled.
[23]For a brief explanation of this policy and the principles behind it, see: "AFDC/Food Stamp/JTPA Eligibility Policy," State Job Training Coordinating Council, Texas Department of Commerce Work Force Development Division, November 30, 1989. This was a briefing item for the Council's Planning/Coordination Committee.
[24]The other two colleges apparently had plans to continue the projects in PY1991 using local funds.

to serve REFOCUS/JOBS clients and will offer statewide technical assistance to other community colleges so that they will be better equipped to serve welfare clients under JOBS as well.

DHS/TEC UI Wage Records Access Project. For several years, DHS had been obtaining employment and earnings data for AFDC recipients from TEC via computer tape. The arrangement DHS sought was for their staff to have direct computer access to these data. In mid-1989, DHS initiated a pilot project through which local DHS Income Assistance staff would be able to access individual-level Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Records data maintained by TEC. These data will be utilized for welfare applicants and recipients to determine their eligibility for and appropriate benefit amounts under the State's AFDC program.[25] Currently, more than 80 DHS staff have access to these UI records in a number of local offices. Data access actually takes place through a complex set of computer-to-computer linkages. Local DHS staff present inquiries to the DHS state computer in Austin which is connected to the Texas Department of Health (TDH) computer. TDH's computer is linked to the Comptroller's computer. The Comptroller's computer ultimately links with the TEC/Austin computer which contains the individual-level UI wage records. The desired employment and earnings information is then passed back along the same route to the local DHS staff. Similar arrangements also exist with the Attorney General's Office of Child Support Enforcement and others.

TEC Case Management. In early 1989, TEC learned that in the future DHS would be putting the contracts for providing services to Category I clients out for competitive bids. Since one of the primary features of REFOCUS was the use of a case management approach, TEC decided to begin preparing its system to compete more effectively for these contracts by developing and implementing training in case management. Staff from the TEC state office initially sat in on case management training sessions being provided by DHS for its staff and then proceeded to take several important steps. First, they wrote a new REFOCUS Manual for use with the TEC staff incorporating a case management approach. Second, they secured Wagner-Peyser 7b funding from the Governor's Office to support the provision of case management training to its regional and local staff. Finally, they contracted with Beverly Ford — the same trainer used by DHS and by TEC for much of its Food Stamp training — to offer case management training to its system. The first of these week-long sessions was held in Austin in October 1989 and covered a number of topics including not only case management but also preparing for change, etc. Staff from each of the regions and from the 42 counties which had DHS contracts for serving Category I clients attended this session. More in-depth sessions were held around the state in 1990 in accordance

[25]The information presented here is based on conversations with Charles Remmert, TEC's staff person overseeing the project (August 30 and September 12, 1990).

with their REFOCUS implementation schedule. The impact of this TEC case management initiative was likely to be seen in 1990 and beyond.

AFDC Adult Education Expansion. Through a TEA appropriations rider, the 71st Texas Legislature also provided for at least an additional $1.0 million for each year of the FY 1990-1991 biennium to expand Adult and Community Education services for AFDC recipients. In the first year, TEA made the funding directly available to the 62 Adult Ed Coops for serving welfare recipients. For FY 1991, TEA and DHS are negotiating an agreement by which this funding can be "passed through" DHS at the state level before reaching the Coops in order to maximize federal matching funds under JOBS. The impact of these efforts to expand Adult Ed services for the AFDC population was not felt locally until well into 1990.[26] Coops first began making use of these Adult Ed funds in January 1990, and by August, 42 of these were actively serving REFOCUS participants.[27]

C. The REFOCUS Initiative

REFOCUS represents DHS' effort to launch a statewide program in stages which would both incorporate the latest national and state research findings on welfare dynamics and welfare-to-work programs and be in synch with Texas resource constraints. Prior to the start of REFOCUS, employment services programs offered by DHS/FSS during the 1980s largely could be described by the WIN program until March 1982, and WIN Demo from 1982 to 1987 or 1988 for the most part. For a brief period in 1986-1987, FSS operated employment services as "generic" programs. (A series of pilot employment-oriented programs also operated during this period as well, including the Home Health Aide Demonstration, the Job Search program, and the Job Training/Work Experience, or JT/WE, Pilots.)

The WIN program of the early 1980s involved joint state administration by DHS and TEC and considerable co-location of staff from those agencies locally in counties — the set of which varied widely from year to year — in which it operated.[28] Clients were mandated to register for employment services unless exempted, though often nearly half of those registering were volunteers, typically mothers with pre-school children. Under WIN Demo, DHS took over

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[26]More attention will be given to the TEA/AFDC initiative later in the research project.

[27]TEA estimates that by August 1990, around 1,800 AFDC recipients were enrolled through Adult Ed Coops. There is no formal reporting system for these funds.

[28]This description of pre-REFOCUS employment services provided by DHS/FSS is drawn from assorted DHS documents and public presentation handouts.

administration of the program at the state level, and the program was expanded to be "statewide." The number of counties actually participating continued to vary widely, ranging from 13 to 167. DHS/FSS negotiated contracts for services — including appraisal, group/individual job counseling, job referrals and reporting — for AFDC recipients from TEC on a cost reimbursement basis in relevant counties. Generally, AFDC WIN-mandatory clients would be minimally assessed by FSS employment services staff to determine their employment and other needs and then referred either to TEC or in some cases (since 1982) to other public or private-non-profit employment agencies for service. WIN volunteers might as often as not seek services on their own through TEC or even JTPA on a "walk-in" basis and not be recorded as participants by DHS/FSS at all. In the pre-REFOCUS days, the DHS/FSS approach to screening clients and referring them for services was minimalist, in keeping with their lean budgets. Child care, if needed for program participation, was most often provided through the use of the few Title XX dollars available after the income-eligible and Child Protective Services cases were taken care of.[29]

Several REFOCUS elements are worth highlighting here:[30]

- Redirection of Mission. REFOCUS shifted the mission from immediate employment for all caretakers to more client-oriented, self-sufficiency strategies for selected groups of recipients. Its mission is now long-term economic independence for those participating.

- Client Targeting. REFOCUS sorted clients initially based on age and duration on AFDC. As new regions came on-line, they adopted the JOBS target groups, including a state-designated group, out-of-school youth aged 16-17 years (i.e., Mandatory Youth). Pilot regions made the target group conversion in April, 1989.

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[29]Note that the provision of child care for program participation has been particularly troublesome. Texas has allocated few resources to add to the Title XX funds available and DHS has given CPS cases priority over others for obvious reasons. However, most of the slots tend to be occupied (and most of the funding expended) by "income-eligible" cases, i.e., those who have found employment but who make so little that DHS is co-paying for child care. These slots tend to turn over at a very low rate once occupied.

[30]This discussion has also benefited considerably from researchers' access to several internal DHS documents, including: DHS (December 1988; April 1989).

- Improved Program Design. REFOCUS improved program design in several ways:

  - Within-Group Screening. Within each target group, clients are profiled into three separate categories by FSS staff based on their education, work history and the presence of other barriers. Category I clients are those who should be job-ready with only six months of program services.[31] Category III clients, those with limited work experience, low education and other major barriers, require treatment beyond DHS' resource capacity. Category II clients, those in between, receive priority for more intensive services, including job training.

  - Assessment. Category II clients with modest education and recent work experience, are assessed beyond the initial screening. Before decisions are made concerning the mix of activities and services, clients are tested (e.g., ABLE Screening Battery) to assess actual levels of reading comprehension, and problem solving skills.

  - Fuller Service Array. In a major departure from past efforts, Category II clients with demonstrated deficiencies preventing meaningful employment may be offered remedial education, skills training and other support services (e.g., child care and transportation) in addition to job placement assistance. Survival Skills training is an integral part of their training. Education and training services are obtained from other systems and financed with non-DHS resources.

  - Case Management. DHS case management is provided for Category II clients only.[32] For most of the 1980s, welfare clients were simply referred to other systems to arrange their own services. REFOCUS thus has re-introduced case management for these clients.

- InterSystem Coordination. A major component of REFOCUS is coordination with other systems serving AFDC recipients, especially TEC for job placement and JTPA for training. Developing and maintaining an extensive, coordinated system of supportive resources both within DHS and within the community is listed as a secondary objective of the program.

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[31]The term "service level" was substituted for "category" in early 1990. The two are used interchangeably here.
[32]TEC began using case management for Category I clients in 1990 in the 42 counties with DHS contracts.

Typical client flow under REFOCUS, as reflected in the early pilot regions, is illustrated in Figure 1, TDHS Employment Services Pilots.[33] It is important to note that this figure characterizes the flow of AFDC clients within DHS. Despite the program's secondary objective of developing and maintaining non-DHS resources in the community, REFOCUS has largely reconstituted DHS' internal procedures for screening, sorting and referring clients to other systems for service. Key steps in the flow are as follows:

Outreach. Although there is considerable regional variation, AFDC clients are sent outreach letters by target group in priority order as determined by computer. In the initial pilot phase, these groups were, in priority order: mandatory youth; newly certified caretakers; caretakers on AFDC for two years or more; and those on AFDC less than two years. Since January 1989, the federally-prescribed target groups — young custodial parents; caretakers on AFDC for 36 of the last 60 months; and caretakers within two years of ineligibility (due to their children's age) — have been substituted for the last three, with regions free to decide their own order for outreach. Each DHS region has decided the content and sequence for sending the outreach letters which vary depending on whether the client is mandatory or voluntary. Typically, the letters contain an explanation of the program requirements and the time and location of the client's appointment with DHS FSS program staff.

Initial Screening/Categorization. FSS workers and/or clerks provide a brief orientation to REFOCUS to those clients who come into the local DHS office — which includes an explanation of Medicaid benefits, client rights and responsibilities, family planning, etc. — and administer a brief categorization instrument, the Employability Potential Profile, or EP-2. The paper-based EP-2 has now been replaced throughout the state with a computerized series of screens, referred to as the Generic Work Sheet (GWS). This process determines whether clients will be classified into the three categories described above. Most of the events which take place from this point on are with more limited DHS FSS involvement with the exception of those classified into Category II. Once clients have been categorized, staff also discuss with them service options and expectations appropriate to their particular service level.

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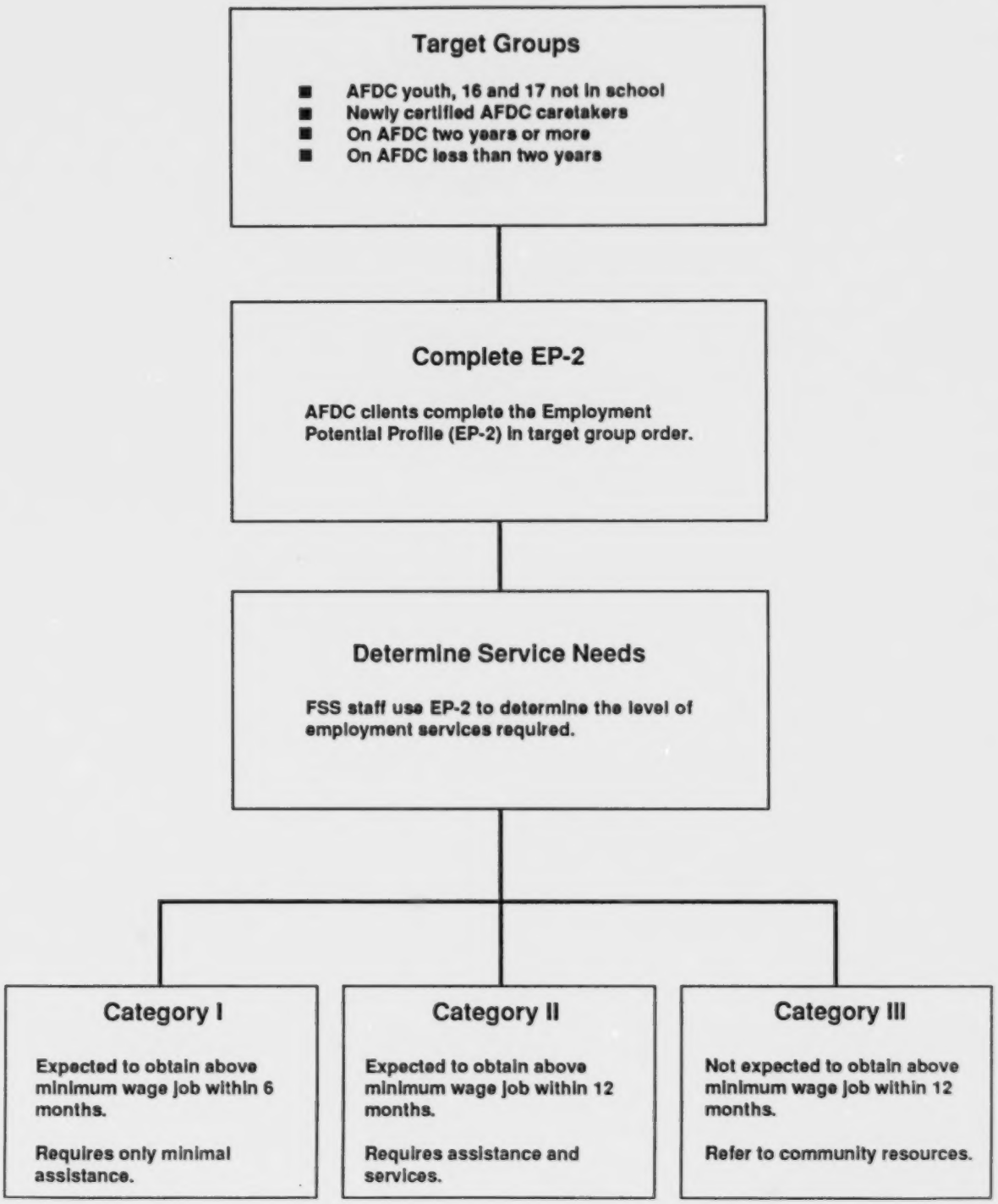
[33]DHS (April 1989) and the initial guidelines for implementation were helpful in reconstructing the client flow.

Figure 1. TDHS Employment Services Pilots


Target Groups
AFDC youth, 16 and 17 not in school
Newly certified AFDC caretakers
On AFDC two years or more
On AFDC less than two years
Complete EP-2
AFDC clients complete the Employment Potential Profile (EP-2) in target group order.
Determine Service Needs
FSS staff use EP-2 to determine the level of employment services required.
Category I
Expected to obtain above minimum wage job within 6 months.
Requires only minimal assistance.
Category II
Expected to obtain above minimum wage job within 12 months.
Requires assistance and services.
Category III
Not expected to obtain above minimum wage job within 12 months.
Refer to community resources.

Program Treatment. The activities and services which REFOCUS clients who have been actively referred by DHS receive vary depending on the category into which they have been classified:

- Category I clients — those with recent work history or a high school education/GED and few other barriers — are generally referred to local TEC offices where they are provided job search services under contract to DHS; in some areas, other organizations (e.g., YWCAs) perform the same role, also under DHS contract. Some short-term training, referrals and other services may be provided to address minor barriers to employment as well.

- Category III clients — those with limited work experience, less than an 8th grade education and other major barriers, typically health problems, etc. — are provided Information and Referral (I&R) packets and essentially left to their own devices until they are reexamined and recategorized after 12 months or so.

- Category II clients — those with at least an 8th grade education and some recent work experience — become the primary focus for intensive DHS services and for more extensive non-DHS programs. They are expected to obtain employment above the minimum wage with the provision of job training, support services and other assistance, including case management services from FSS. Except for some support services and case management, any education, remediation, adult basic education, job training, and/or job placement activities and services must be obtained from other, non-DHS programs and resources. JTPA is the usual first stop for these clients who are guided by their case manager. Since January 1989, all Category II clients are to have been tested by DHS for functional level in terms of reading and problem solving skills (via ABLE Screening Battery). It is not unusual for Category II clients requiring child care or transportation to receive it from JTPA since DHS' resources to provide for them have been limited and unpredictable.

Most AFDC clients have not waited patiently for DHS FSS workers to outreach, screen, categorize and refer them for services. While the experience varies from area to area, it appears that in the most recent year of operations, non-REFOCUS AFDC recipients ("walk-ins") have

outnumbered REFOCUS referrals served through JTPA by as much as four to one.[34] The underlying reasons for this will be explored in the course of this research. In any event, it seems clear that, while REFOCUS has had an effect on DHS screening and referral procedures, its impact on the broader non-DHS programs may be limited by the small numbers of clients actually making their way to those programs by way of FSS processes.

Postprogram Support. In 1989, DHS sought and received a waiver from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to implement transitional child care and Medicaid benefits a full year before they were officially set to take effect in four of its regions: the three pilot regions and El Paso. In April 1989, these four regions began offering 12 months of transitional benefits to a randomly selected group of eligible clients, while still providing the basic, more limited transitional benefits (i.e., 4 months) to the remainder.

[34]DHS figures for the period March through October 1989 indicate that REFOCUS accounted for 28.3 percent of the AFDC clients served in JTPA in El Paso, 48.3 percent in San Antonio, and 41.5 percent in Houston. However, these figures should definitely be viewed as outer-bound estimates of REFOCUS/JTPA penetration, since DHS counts individuals as REFOCUS clients in JTPA if they were ever profiled for service and if they were ever served in JTPA during the period. See: DHS (August 28, 1990), based on data processed through July 31, 1990.

V. SITE VISITS

A. El Paso

1. Service Delivery Areas, Organizational Structure and Staffing

The regional boundaries of the key agencies delivering welfare-to-work programs in the far western portion of the state encompass thousands of miles of sparsely populated, remote areas. Although the six-county service area of DHS Region 3 (DHS) and the Upper Rio Grande Private Industry Council (PIC) are coterminous, the Midland TEC Region spans 36 counties (Figure 2).[35] Of the more than 600,000 people located within the DHS/PIC service area, almost 97 percent reside in El Paso County and nearly 90 percent of those live within the city limits.[36] As such, the primary thrust of welfare-to-work programs provided by the three agencies was directed toward residents of El Paso County, particularly those in the City of El Paso.

Within Region 3, DHS employment and training services were focussed exclusively on El Paso County and administered by FSS staff. As a part of serving their clients, the FSS staff established and has continued to maintain a close working relationship with other units within the agency, especially Income Assistance (IA) and Contracts staff. Intra-agency communication was also promoted by the "adopt-a-unit" concept whereby staff members were assigned contact persons in other units for the purpose of disseminating program information.

As a subcontractor to DHS, employment services provided by TEC as part of the welfare-to-work network were also concentrated in El Paso. Contractual arrangements were handled by the State and Regional Offices and direct delivery of services was provided by TEC's Downtown Office. Located near the railroad tracks and missions, the Downtown Office was also the only local office offering Job Corps recruitment services. Employment assistance routinely provided by TEC was available to AFDC walk-ins at all local offices throughout the region.

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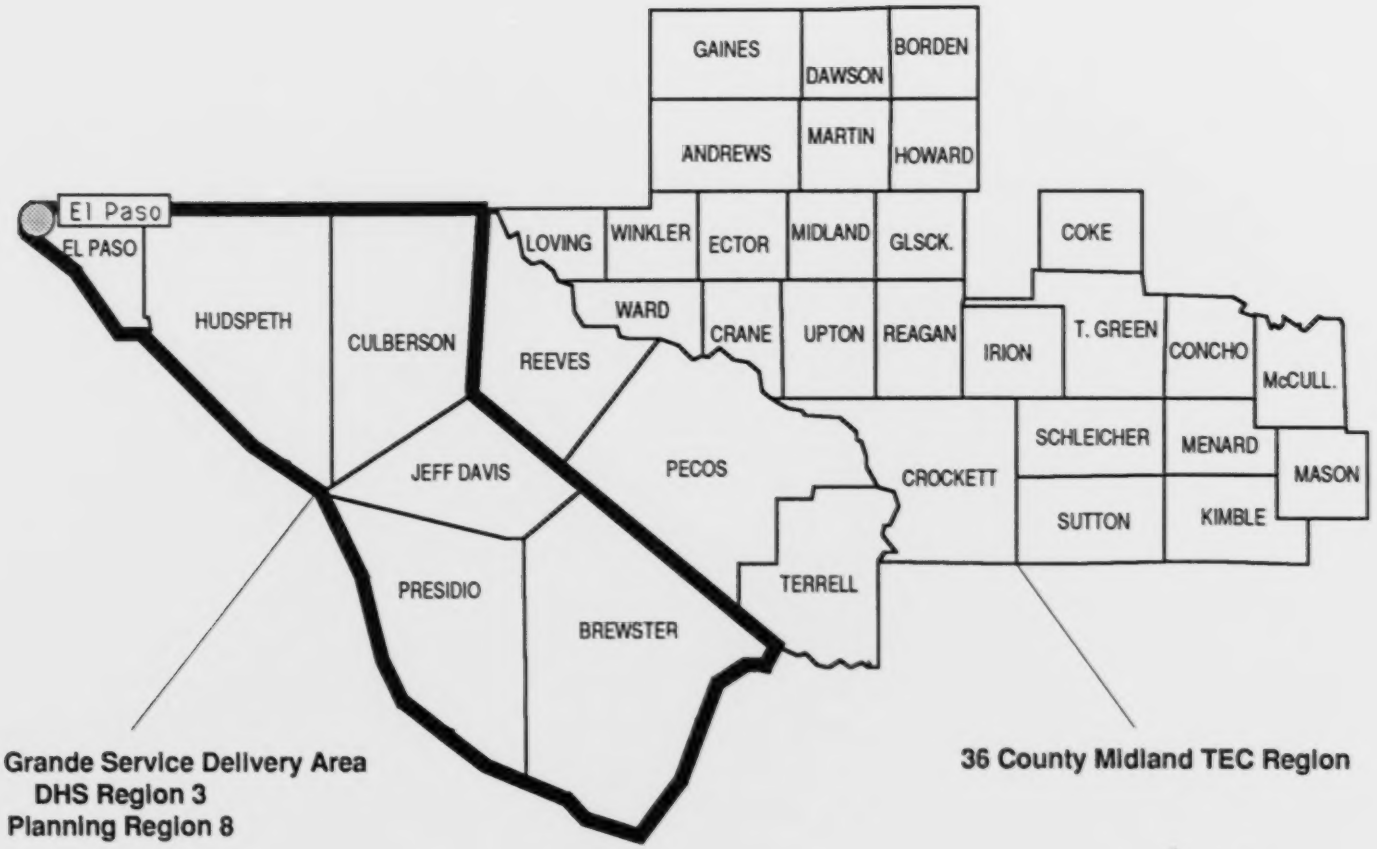
[35]The DHS Regional Office located in El Paso is actually responsible for Region 3/12. The service area of DHS Region 3/12 encompasses 23 counties with six located in Region 3 (El Paso) and seventeen in Region 12 (Permian Basin). Of the 47 FSS positions in Region 3/12 as of January 1990, 34 were employed in Region 3. The six-county service area of DHS Region 3 and the PIC includes Brewster, Culberson, El Paso, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis and Presidio. These six counties plus Andrews, Borden, Crane, Coke, Concho, Crockett, Dawson, Ector, Gaines, Glasscock, Howard, Irion, Kimble, Loving, Martin, Mason, McCulloch, Menard, Midland, Pecos, Reagan, Reeves, Schleicher, Sterling, Sutton, Terrell, Tom Green, Upton, Ward and Winkler make up the Midland TEC Region.

[36]Population estimates as of July 1, 1988. See: Texas Department of Commerce, Texas State Data Center (1989).

Figure 2
Regional Boundaries
El Paso Area



Upper Rio Grande Service Delivery Area
DHS Region 3
Planning Region 8

36 County Midland TEC Region

The same focus on El Paso was also true for the Upper Rio Grande PIC although limited services were available at the Alpine Office.[37] Unlike the other PICs in this report, the Upper Rio Grande PIC is highly centralized, providing most activities and services in-house. Certified vocational counselors account for over one-third of its staff. Subcontractors are used sparingly. Even the Summer Youth Program is run internally with the PIC writing each and every paycheck.

Co-location of DHS, TEC and PIC staff occurred prior to 1985 and post-1989, but not during the intervening years. Prior to 1985, DHS and TEC staff were co-located under the WIN program. Since 1989, the co-location of staff has increased and there are plans to expand existing co-location efforts. Currently, a DHS case worker is officing at the PIC and an El Paso Community College (EPCC) employee works out of the DHS El Paso Drive Office. The EPCC employee is involved with Paso Adelante and other education-related projects serving AFDC clients

Over the 1985-1989 period, the makeup of the DHS, PIC and TEC staffs as well as individuals working in community-based organizations has remained relatively constant. The Office Manager of TEC's Downtown Office has been in his current position for 18 years and with the agency for almost 25 years. And, the PIC's Executive Vice President since 1981 originally started out as a counselor with CETA in 1976. The CSS Program Director (PD) for employment services has over four years service and the CSS Regional Director (RD) for eligibility has worked in IA for more than 18 years. An exception on the DHS side is the CSS RD for employment services, formerly the RD for Staff Development and Personnel, who has been in his current position for roughly one year. Overall, the changes that have occurred have been minimal and for the most part, have been intra- or inter-agency transfers and promotions rather than employee turnover per se. The continuity evidenced in the El Paso area may best be illustrated by the smooth transition of CETA staff to the JTPA program: El Paso did not throw out the staff with the program. This philosophy and staff continuity generally are characteristic of El Paso's welfare-to-work network. Apparently, these programs had good coordination and working relations pre-1985, even in CETA and WIN/WIN Demo days.

2. Overview of El Paso's Welfare-to-Work Programs

Among welfare-to-work service providers in El Paso, it is clear that a singular goal was shared by all: assisting welfare clients in obtaining long-term, self sufficiency. The definition of

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[37]Due to its remote location, the PIC's Alpine Office concentrates primarily on serving residents through the school system. All eligibility and certification of clients are performed by the PIC's El Paso Office.

self-sufficiency, however, was not narrowly perceived as economic, but as trying to assist clients in attaining a self-awareness and instilling emotional and social self-sufficiency as well. Program objectives and strategies generally emphasized long-term, quality training and development of career pathways as opposed to mere placement. Yet, while their goal was the same, there was also recognition that their roles in accomplishing the goal were uniquely different. This is best illustrated by the safety net of programs that were initiated locally to serve welfare clients. With little or no duplication in service, these programs originated as service gaps were identified by the *community of agencies*. This ability of the various agencies to function as part of the larger community and not as a separate unit or program may account for the notable absence of turf issues. The phrase, *community of agencies*, essentially captures the character of El Paso's welfare-to-work programs and is a theme which will be recurring in this section.

Table 3

Chronology of El Paso Welfare-to-Work Coordination Initiatives, 1985 - 1989

Date	Coordination Initiative
1985	Expedited Referral
1985	Project Redirection
1986	Young Parent Program
1987	Services to AFDC Caretakers
1987	Women's Employment Group
1988	Mother-Daughter Program
1989	Day Care Services
1989	REFOCUS
1989	Paso Adelante

REFOCUS, THE INITIAL STAGES

El Paso was part of the second round of sites selected by the DHS State Office to implement REFOCUS. As such, El Paso was able to benefit from the lessons learned by staff in the other pilot areas. On the advice of staff from the three pilot sites, El Paso focussed its planning efforts on two critical issues: the leveraging of community resources and staff training in case management.

In the summer of 1988, roughly eight months prior to implementation on February 1, 1989, FSS regional staff began planning for REFOCUS in El Paso. Conducive to local operations, REFOCUS was not a top-down process. State Office staff encouraged and facilitated flexibility at the local-level, an aspect that was well-received in El Paso. Besides generating program policies and procedures, FSS staff spent the majority of their time out in the community explaining REFOCUS and lining up potential resources. For example, FSS staff attempted to outreach every education group and in the process, produced a guide dedicated to education resources, especially vocational education. FSS staff endeavored to distribute information on REFOCUS throughout the community so as to foster a widespread sense of involvement as well as ownership in the program. While formal meetings were held, the FSS staff's main tactic was to expand upon their established relationships with agencies and individuals in the community.

FSS staff training was provided by the DHS State Office and supplemented by locally-sponsored training sessions at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP).[38] These classes were provided by UTEP on an ongoing basis as part of their Continuing Education program and addressed task-centered casework and group work skills. Key DHS staff also made site visits to the various pilot regions to observe operations and to assist them in identifying training needs based on functions. In addition, a retreat focussing on how to be more client oriented was sponsored by the DHS Regional Office. To varying degrees — mostly on an as needed basis — representatives from TEC, PIC and other groups were included in the various training sessions.[39]

A unique dimension of the REFOCUS planning and start-up was the ability of FSS staff to wind-down the WIN program before beginning REFOCUS. The WIN outreach effort was shut down on November 15, 1988, although TEC staff continued to work with mandatory clients on their existing caseloads. To the credit of DHS staff and the existing interagency relationships,

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[38]Arrangements for these classes were made by DHS' Regional Department of Staff Development.

[39]In addition to DHS-sponsored training sessions, the State Office of TEC conducted a training session for TEC staff that would be involved in Refocus and also did individualized site training. Additional training in case management was also provided to local TEC staff by TEC's State Office in Fall 1989.

REFOCUS started smoothly in El Paso for all agencies involved. While the program's objectives were no surprise to service providers in El Paso, REFOCUS did confirm their belief that helping AFDC clients was a community effort and not a one-agency job.

OTHER LOCAL INITIATIVES

In addition to REFOCUS, a number of other welfare-to-work initiatives that depended on inter-agency coordination occurred during the study period (1985 to 1989).[40] The following provides a brief description of those initiatives that had a local impetus. The number and scope of these efforts is indicative of the support for and commitment to coordinated programs in El Paso. Those initiatives that were orchestrated at the state level (e.g., 7b Job Search Seminars, DHS membership on the PIC) are not covered in this section.

Expedited Referral Initiative. In 1985, DHS case workers and PIC counselors voiced concerns that the existing, inter-agency referral mechanism was not enabling staff to use agency resources to their full potential.[41] AFDC client characteristics necessitated a tighter and quicker response system if the agencies expected to keep clients from falling through the cracks. In response, DHS and the PIC signed a Summary of Understanding outlining each agency's responsibility. Briefly, this agreement streamlined the referral mechanism by establishing procedures for making referrals, providing inter-agency feedback and facilitating client access to support services, especially day care. In 1987, the expedited referral mechanism was further strengthened when the PIC used JTPA Six Percent monies to create a dedicated liaison position for AFDC clients. Upon termination of the Six Percent monies, Title IIA monies were used to continue funding the Upper Rio Grande PIC AFDC Coordinator position.

Project Redirection. A multi-agency coordination effort as well as a combined state- and local-level initiative, Project Redirection provides comprehensive, community-based services for pregnant and parenting adolescents. The project's stated goal is to increase the self-sufficiency of pregnant and parenting teen mothers. One of their strategies is to foster cooperative efforts among agencies and groups in El Paso, thereby maximizing public resources. To some extent, the

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[40]Joint efforts to coordinate services to AFDC clients in El Paso prior to 1985 were also evident. An excellent example was the PACE initiative. PACE was a joint training effort in which the PIC supplied the clients, DHS financed the program with WIN monies, and El Paso Community College provided the training. Although it was not the focus of the site visit, international initiatives were also discovered. For example, an International Cooperative Agreement concerning child welfare services exists with Juarez.

[41]This initiative may have originated shortly before 1985. The only document referring to it that was readily available during the site visit was dated September 1985. The text of that document indicated that the agreement was to some extent a continuation of an existing one. In any event, it should be noted that this initiative preceded the state-level TDCA/DHS agreement.

program's formative stages occurred locally when the El Paso Independent School District (EPISD) converted an existing building into an alternative school for pregnant teens. Soon other local ISDs were interested in following EPISD's example but were limited by funding. To find a solution, the local ISDs joined forces with the YWCA and the concept of creating a city-wide program gained momentum. At roughly the same time, the Teen Parent Initiative was conceived at the state level and plans were made to fund two pilot projects.[42] The YWCA and the local ISDs submitted a grant proposal and Project Redirection began operation in El Paso in 1985. Initial grant funding came from DHS, TDCA, and TEA with local agencies and each ISD also contributing services or monies.[43] Administered by the YWCA, the project focuses on removing educational barriers faced by teen mothers. Continued eligibility for participation is dependent on staying in school or a training program. A decentralized network of nine case managers and numerous volunteer mentors served roughly 1,300 teen mothers in 1989. Project Redirection outcomes cited by the YWCA include a reduction in the number of low birth weight babies, an increase in the number of high school graduates and a delay in subsequent pregnancies. Participants have been mainly Hispanic adolescents from low-income families. In 1988, project-related services were augmented when the YWCA received federal funding to implement El Nido de la Familia (The Family Nest), a parenting program for Hispanic teen mothers and fathers.[44]

Young Parent Program. Designed as a re-entry program for school dropouts, the Young Parent Program which started in 1986 is an off-shoot of Project Redirection. Participants are parents-to-be, parenting males and females or welfare recipient youth aged 17 to 21. A strictly structured program emphasizing punctuality and attendance, the Young Parent Program's services include counseling, GED and other educational assistance, job search activities and support services such as child care. Operated by El Paso Community College (EPCC) and funded by the PIC, program staff work closely with the YWCA and DHS. Most clients are referred by Project Redirection but referrals also come from DHS. Roughly half of the participants in the Young Parent Program are receiving AFDC benefits.

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[42] In 1985, representatives from the State Offices of TDCA, DHS, TEA, and the Texas Department of Health met to discuss the issue of teen pregnancy. Their efforts evolved into the Teen Parent Initiative. DHS was designated the lead agency by the Texas Legislature.

[43] A substantial increase in TEA funding is anticipated in the future as a result of S.B. 417 which created the School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program.

[44] The YWCA's involvement in El Paso community programs assisting low income and welfare families is extensive. In addition to Project Redirection, the Women's Employment Program and the Mother-Daughter Program, the YWCA also is a key provider of regular, day care services and an after-school latch key program; operates a summer camp program staffed by PIC-sponsored recreation aides; coordinates PACT, a teen counseling training program for teen peers; and produces the Teen Yellow Pages, a directory of community resources written by and for teens. One of the largest YWCA's in the country, the majority of their programs are dependent on a large volunteer component.

Services to AFDC Caretakers. Signed in 1987, this DHS/PIC inter-agency agreement intensified efforts to coordinate the utilization of currently available resources and optimize the delivery of training and employment services to AFDC clients referred from DHS. The agreement established a joint assessment process known as the Employability Development Plan and further encouraged joint staff efforts to provide support services and placement assistance.

Women's Employment Group. Originally funded by DHS in 1987, the YWCA's Women's Employment Program is now jointly funded by DHS and Levi-Strauss. The program enables the YWCA to provide two-week job search seminars, hold monthly support groups and perform job development for AFDC clients. The majority of clients participating in the program are REFOCUS Category II clients.

Mother-Daughter Program. Started in the Fall of 1988, this program was designed to build self-esteem and to develop leadership and other skills needed for success in school. The target population is Hispanic females in the sixth grade who come from economically or educationally disadvantaged homes. A key feature of the program is that mothers of the students are also required to participate. Funded by private foundations, the at-risk prevention program is jointly operated by the YWCA, UTEP and three local ISDs. UTEP and the school district administrators are responsible for the nine-month, in-school program and the YWCA works with the students during the summer. When students complete the program, they are encouraged to join the YWCA's Teen Clubs. The YWCA plays an integral role in trying to track and keep the students involved until they graduate from high school.

Day Care Services. An excerpt from the first sentence of this 1989 PIC/DHS inter-agency agreement, "A need has arisen...," exemplifies the El Paso approach. In this case, the agencies realized that non-categorized AFDC clients were routinely — and not as a last resort — receiving PIC monies for day care. Their response was to create a joint PIC/DHS procedure for providing day care services to all self-referred, non-categorized AFDC clients seeking PIC services. Once again, the agencies were trying to stretch their limited resources.

Paso Adelante (formerly Primer Paso). A multi-agency effort, Paso Adelante (Step Forward) evolved as a direct response to the need for a mechanism to "broker" educational services to REFOCUS clients, particularly Category III clients. The program originated in a grant proposal that was written by EPCC, and funded in July 1989 by the Coordinating Board. Additional funding for the program was also provided by DHS. A broad spectrum of representatives from El Paso agencies — DHS, Adult Basic Education Cooperatives, EPCC, and the PIC — served on the

grant's Advisory Committee, and it was this group that became the steering committee for what evolved into Paso Adelante. Designed to enhance career and educational planning, the objectives of Paso Adelante are to assist Category III clients in developing an awareness of themselves, potential career fields and educational programs. The curriculum, authored by EPCC staff, is designed to enable clients to make their own choices. The program has no assessment requirements prior to entry, and the curriculum does not presume that clients have a certain literacy level which other similar, survival skills type courses routinely did. Paso Adelante provides a four-week, life-planning seminar with three, three-hour sessions per week. Classes are provided in English and Spanish at eight sites throughout the city. Teachers are provided by the Ysleta and El Paso Adult Co-ops with monies earmarked by TEA for DHS clients. Tutors or facilitator aides are provided by DHS. Support services for clients are provided by DHS and the PIC. DHS is also conducting ethnographic evaluations of Paso Adelante participants that will be used to create a tracking system for recording client literacy and social growth.

3. Welfare-to-Work Client Flow

Although the points of entry into the welfare-to-work network are numerous, the most common access points are DHS and the Upper Rio Grande PIC. The distinguishing factor between the various points of entry and the resulting services provided is whether or not the agency is a provider of employment and training related programs or an agency orchestrating service delivery. In the latter (DHS), entry into the system and the resulting services provided depend on the client's categorization and their place in the queue.

POINT OF ENTRY: DHS

During the period in review, the focal point of welfare-to-work services at DHS was REFOCUS.[45] A computerized system outreached clients in target groups. Those clients responding were scheduled for orientation where they were categorized using the EP2. Clients categorized as IIs were scheduled for a month-long session which included an orientation and survival skills training. Although REFOCUS was a mandatory program, there was a general effort to downplay the sanctions so at not to adversely affect participant motivation. The typical client flow and services provided are described below.

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[45]Other El Paso welfare-to-work programs for AFDC clients operating between 1985 and the start-up of REFOCUS in 1988 included the WIN Demo, AFDC Job Search and the Home Health Aide Program. While important, these programs were not as inter-agency oriented as REFOCUS nor were they as uniformly expansive in terms of numbers served and services provided. For these reasons, the client flow section deals only with REFOCUS.

Targeted Category I Clients. Category I clients were referred to TEC for employment services focussing on job search assistance and related activities.[46] In Fall 1989, TEC refined its provision of employment services and began using a case management approach that identified and eliminated barriers to employment before clients began job search. Occasionally, Category II clients were also referred to TEC. Rarely were Category III clients referred. When Category II and III clients were referred, TEC served them but found that it adversely affected staff time available for serving the pool of Category I clients that could best be served by TEC.

After being referred to TEC, clients were contacted within one week. The first step in TEC's client flow sequence included an appraisal interview where work history and the need for various types of support services would be assessed. Clients were then scheduled for a Friday morning orientation session that would provide them with an overview of the program, explain the services available and the outcomes expected. After orientation, selected clients were formally registered for the program.[47] The next step was participation in a week-long, half-day job search seminar. The seminar was given in English using the Karli method, as modified for welfare clients.[48] After completion of the seminar, clients were engaged in an intensive job search that under program guidelines could continue for seven weeks. Clients were encouraged to make five work search contacts per week. If clients were not successful in their job search at the end of the seven weeks, the TEC case managers would continue to work with them though the clients would no longer be eligible for the transportation allowance. Placed clients were reassessed (followed-up) after six months.

Interaction between DHS and TEC case managers was limited since Category I clients who composed the bulk of the TEC caseload did not have assigned DHS case managers. In essence, TEC personnel served as the case managers for Category I clients.

Targeted Category II Clients. Category II clients were assigned DHS case managers whose roles were to assess the client, assist in setting goals and explore vocational possibilities.[49] Case managers were responsible for assessing clients' educational and training needs and for referring them to appropriate providers. Testing of participants using the ABLE Screening Battery

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[46]TEC employment services for REFOCUS clients were governed by a contractual arrangement similar to WIN.

[47]Under contractual arrangements, TEC was not required to serve all referred clients, only a pre-determined percentage. Roughly 40 to 50% of the clients referred are actually registered for the program. This was noted as a significant improvement over WIN Demo statistics.

[48]The majority of Category I clients did not exhibit a language barrier.

[49]Waiting lists or client backlogs were not experienced. El Paso has only recently begun a waiting list. Current Category II clients that are placed on the waiting list are not assigned case managers but are enrolled in survival skills training so as to avoid discouragement.

was at the discretion of the case manager.[50] Each case manager maintained a caseload of no more than 55 clients.[51]

DHS case managers were provided with a listing of available JTPA services and the associated entrance requirements by the Upper Rio Grande PIC AFDC Coordinator. Category II clients that might benefit from JTPA services were initially identified by the case managers, and their cases were jointly reviewed with the Upper Rio Grande PIC AFDC Coordinator. If appropriate, these clients were then scheduled for PIC intake and eligibility determination. Verification of AFDC status of referred clients was provided by DHS. From JTPA intake, the Category II clients went directly to testing and an initial assessment which was conducted by the Upper Rio Grande counseling staff. The initial assessment was considered a preliminary screening to determine the type of training and services that would be appropriate for the specific client. Classes in job preparation skills training were also made available to clients to expand their awareness of job market requirements. After the initial assessment and prior to final acceptance in a training program, an Employability Development Plan (EDP) was prepared. The EDP, an Upper Rio Grande PIC document, was prepared by the Employability Development Team which consisted of the client, the PIC counseling staff, the referring DHS worker and other teaching instructors or staff as appropriate.[52] The EDP outlined the training, placement and support services to be provided to the client and designated which ones would be provided by the PIC and which would be provided by DHS. If the clients agreed to the EDP, they were enrolled in a JTPA program. The services outlined in the EDP might include vocational education, on-the-job training, job search assistance, support and placement. As the client progressed through activities, the Employability Development Team was also responsible for performing periodic updates and reassessments. Primary responsibility for reassessments rested with the PIC counselor with other members of the Team serving as resources. Upon completion of the JTPA program, placement and follow-up of clients was coordinated between DHS and PIC staff. Monthly meetings to review the referral, training and placement program for AFDC clients were held between the PIC and DHS supervisors and staff.

Targeted Category III Clients. Initially, Category III clients did not receive anywhere near the services provided to Category I and II clients. Category III clients were given an Information and Referral packet stressing education and training resources available within the community.

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[50]DHS staff indicated that the lack of a Spanish version of ABLE inhibited the testing process.

[51]Throughout the site visits, it was noted that DHS case managers identified as positions dedicated as trainers, liaisons or other roles, were still required to carry a somewhat reduced caseload. The caseload quotas appeared to limit agency flexibility for creating dedicated positions to service identified needs.

[52]Often, the referring DHS workers would request the PIC's AFDC Coordinator to take their place at these sessions.

With the advent of Paso Adelante (formerly Primer Paso), services to Category III clients increased dramatically as did their ability to make positive steps toward self-sufficiency.

Non-Targeted, Walk-Ins. In the case of non-targeted walk-ins, DHS procedure was to inform them of the REFOCUS program, explain the objectives of the program and give them an informational packet outlining available community resources. Cases would not be opened or assigned. Walk-ins did not get the same level of services in terms of support services and case management as REFOCUS clients.

POINT OF ENTRY: THE UPPER RIO GRANDE PIC

Although AFDC clients referred to the PIC by other agencies, especially DHS, received more of a support network by their attachment to the referring agency, the PIC did not have a special training program for AFDC clients. To avoid stigma, all AFDC clients — referrals and walk-ins — were mainstreamed. All PIC clients, referrals and walk-ins, had access to the full spectrum of JTPA services.

Applicants who were certified as being eligible for JTPA services by the PIC underwent an initial assessment which consisted of an interview and testing using APTICOM. The initial assessment was considered a preliminary screening to determine the type of training and services that would be appropriate for the specific client. Classes in job preparation skills training were also made available to clients to expand their awareness of job market requirements. Depending on their skill level, clients might also be enrolled in in-house, general foundation classes in an occupational area prior to deciding on a career track. These feeder classes were designed to give clients a leg-up before entering regular classes. Prior to final acceptance in a training program, an EDP was prepared by the Employability Development Team which consisted of the client, the PIC counseling staff, the PIC AFDC Coordinator and other teaching instructors or staff as appropriate. EDP activities might include work maturity classes, job search, general educational development, remedial academic training, English as a second language, vocational training and on-the-job training. From this point on, the PIC client flow was similar to that described above for Category II referrals from DHS with one major exception — less DHS staff involvement occurred. Since non-DHS-referred clients were unlikely to have assigned case managers, there were no designated DHS staff responsible for the clients. In these instances, the PIC AFDC Coordinator served as the go-between in accessing DHS-sponsored support services for eligible clients.[53] An important

[53]As the activity generated by walk-ins increased, DHS and the PIC agreed to co-locate a DHS case manager at the PIC to act as a liaison for non-categorized, walk-in clients. The primary purpose of the position was to assist these

aspect of the Upper Rio Grande PIC's approach was the emphasis on supportive services after the participant entered employment. Previously, the only PIC support service available to participants who had entered employment was counseling. This policy was modified in PY 1986 to allow for post-program support services for up to six months after placement.

In addition to adult welfare-to-work participants, children from AFDC families also received employment and training services from the PIC. Eligible youth were most likely to participate initially in the summer program. Services provided during the summer included classroom training (basic remedial, pre-employment skills, labor market information, and job seeking skills),work experience, vocational exploration, special programs or a combination of classroom training and work experience.

4. Support Services

Support services available to El Paso welfare-to-work clients included child care and transportation. Although other support services such as eyeglasses, clothing or one-time emergencies, were not routinely provided, they were procured for clients as feasible. Less tangible support services in the form of support groups were abundantly provided by the network of community-based programs, in particular the YWCA and El Paso Community College.

Child Care. The majority of the day care services were furnished by the YWCA, the largest provider of day care within the El Paso area.[54] However, limited financial resources of El Paso agencies resulted in an inability to meet the demand for day care. Thus, AFDC clients were first encouraged to find their own day care. Money, however, was not the only impediment to securing day care. Non-traditional day care such as night-shift care and sick-child care was virtually impossible to find.[55]

AFDC clients in employment programs were second-in-line behind child protective services cases for DHS-provided day care. Within the AFDC client group, REFOCUS clients were given priority for Title XX slots. Case managers would directly refer Category II clients for day care

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clients in securing DHS-sponsored day care. The co-located case manager, however, is expected to maintain a reduced (45 as compared to 55) caseload in addition to their liaison duties. This position became effective January 1990.

[54]The YWCA currently has more than 2000 children from six weeks to 12 years enrolled in various types of day care activities — more than one-third of the day care slots are funded by DHS. YWCA day care services are provided at 19 sites, 11 of which are at public housing locations. The YWCA also operates a day care aide training program funded by PIC. The training program combines classroom training with on-site experience. Program completers are guaranteed a position at one of the YWCA day care sites.

[55]DHS Regional Office is currently working on a contract to arrange for night shift and sick-child care. In addition, DHS is also considering arranging drop-in care as currently provided by Region 10, North Star office. The program at North Star is commonly known as the Rainbow Room.

services while Category I and III clients received only an Information and Referral form. While day care funds were also available through the PIC, using JTPA funds for day care was generally done as a last resort since these were intended to be training resources.[56] Limited day care slots were also provided by some community-based programs.

Transportation. Across the board, public transportation services in El Paso were described as poorly designed and expensive. The one-direction orientation of the public bus routes resulted in a simple trip requiring multi-transfers plus a considerable time investment. When a child care drop off was included in the trip, the feasibility of using public transportation was greatly diminished. Reliance on the public bus system was a less-than-desirable alternative. Monies for transportation costs were downplayed in orientation sessions by DHS. Only Category I and II clients routinely received bus tokens.[57] DHS transportation resources were not available for non-REFOCUS clients.

In general, the PIC policy was to look at each case individually. Each counselor was responsible for researching and analyzing their client's resources and needs and preparing a detailed report. If a need was evidenced, the request was personally reviewed by the PIC's Executive Vice President. As with day care, the PIC attempted to first use DHS monies for transportation and all other AFDC client support services.

5. Reporting and Accountability

Formal inter-agency program reporting occurred between TEC and DHS only as a result of their contractual relationship. Otherwise, inter-agency reporting or information sharing took place informally over the telephone, at ad hoc meetings and at quarterly PIC meetings. PIC meetings also provided a chance for the agency board members to have input into the PIC planning process. The Regional FSS PD has been a PIC member since 1987. Board membership also has included representatives from TEC and community-based organizations. Across the agencies, supervisors, counselors and case managers communicated frequently on an informal basis. For the most part, these exchanges focussed on explaining programs, seeking input and providing updates. Formal statistical reports were not routinely shared.

Communications that were routinely required in the process of agency staff performing their jobs also exhibited a high degree of coordination. For example, the PIC relied on DHS to

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[56]The PIC actually paid substantial sums for day care services — over $60,000 in one month. As a result, an inter-agency procedure was developed for first accessing DHS-designated funds for eligible clients before expending PIC monies.

[57]Bus tokens for Category I clients were distributed by TEC using DHS funds.

provide them with the current eligibility status of AFDC and Food Stamp recipients. Initially, a somewhat formal and cumbersome communications mechanism governed this data exchange and resulted in unnecessary delays in processing clients through JTPA programs. Both DHS and PIC staff realized that a revised, information exchange mechanism was needed to expedite the transfer of pertinent client data. After receiving State Office permission and resolving issues of confidentiality, the agencies began exchanging status data first by telephone and now by fax.[58]

In a strict sense, joint-agency performance measures did not exist. Performance measures were for the most part intra-agency oriented with the exception of the TEC/DHS REFOCUS contract. Although TEC was responsible to DHS contractually on a regional basis, the contract terms were more or less standardized statewide. These measures included an entered employment rate, an employment retention rate and a target wage level. Placement-related information was verified by TEC and reported to DHS. The level of emphasis placed on performance measures by DHS may have been more reflective of REFOCUS and the program's philosophical shift from "finding any job" to literacy, training and self-sufficiency. This change in philosophy and the relative newness of REFOCUS during the period of observation most likely accounted for the de-emphasis and absence of performance-driven program attitudes.[59] Though DHS had in-house data that could be reviewed, the closest semblance to internal performance measures was found in the Critical Success Factors that support the personnel review system. These Factors were developed by State Office with input from the Regions as to where responsibility would rest. The PIC, on the other hand, did have clearly defined performance measures and standards related to AFDC client services and outcomes. These measures, however, applied to total AFDC clients served by the PIC's Title IIA programs and were not limited to categorized referrals.[60]

6. The Impact of REFOCUS and Other Initiatives

REFOCUS did not have a broad-based impact on the internal operations of agencies in the El Paso area. For instance, the Upper Rio Grande PIC's approach was based on a philosophy congruent with REFOCUS. Its client services were firmly driven by the assessment process. Of course, as a DHS-administered program, the impact on internal DHS operations was substantial as was its effect on the TEC contractual staff.

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[58]Although the fax exchange system has recently been implemented, the two agencies are already looking to improve the system. Their next step is to install a DHS computer line at the PIC office, enabling on-line access to DHS records.

[59]It should be noted that DHS performance measures were dropped when REFOCUS started. Under JOBS, the Secretary of Health and Human Services must establish performance standards by October 1993.

[60]During the period studied (roughly equivalent to the PIC's Program Years 1985 through 1988), the PIC exceeded its performance standard for AFDC entered employment percentage every year by continually increasing margins.

As briefly discussed in the preceding section, REFOCUS changed DHS' welfare-to-work approach from emphasis on immediate employment to literacy and training for economic self-sufficiency.[61] This shift in program philosophy had the greatest impact on the roles of DHS line employees, specifically FSS case managers. Under the WIN Demo, case workers focussed on *pushing the numbers*. REFOCUS changed their roles from an immediate outcome-oriented one to more of a pure social work role in which case management was the driving force.

The most significant impact REFOCUS had on TEC was to dramatically change the referral system.[62] Under WIN, TEC screened everyone who qualified. Under REFOCUS, the responsibility for screening everyone was transferred to DHS. This practice reduced considerably the number of clients that TEC initially saw. This reduction in flow changed both TEC's approach and affected the outcome of services. REFOCUS increased the pool of Category I clients that TEC was most likely to place, increased the amount of individualized attention per client and increased client awareness as to the merits and benefits of REFOCUS.

Overall, REFOCUS and the other initiatives confirmed the belief held by El Paso agencies that helping AFDC clients was a community effort and not a one-agency job. Their combined efforts strengthened and widened the community support network for AFDC caretakers, allowing agencies to focus their program services more intensively on this target group.

7. The Nature and Degree of Coordination

While the level of inter-agency coordination in El Paso was uniformly described as good-to-high relative to the past and to the rest of the state, it was also considered as far from complete by the various El Paso program staffs (opinions). Coordination was credited with enabling program accomplishments and also for highlighting how much still needed to be accomplished.

Key factors promoting coordination included the notable absence of turf issues, two-way communications and a roundtable approach to problem solving. Operating as a *community of agencies* and not as autonomous service providers, program obstacles were more likely to be resolved quickly with a simple telephone call as opposed to a formally scheduled meeting. As

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[61] Although the replacement of the WIN Demo with REFOCUS was a complete change in program philosophy, it might be more appropriately termed a reversal to the original WIN concept as implemented in 1969 with an expanded services network.

[62] Another equally significant impact in terms of program design was the introduction of TEC case management training in Fall 1989. However, it is not emphasized in this paper since TEC staff were only beginning to implement it during the tailend of the study period (1985-1989) and its impact was not likely to be observable until well into 1990 and beyond.

stated by one interviewee, El Pasoans are "not looking for thirteen reasons why it can't be done but one reason why it can."

Evidence of coordination was widespread. In terms of planning and program services, one can point to the myriad of local programs targeting AFDC clients that are jointly operated (as well as originally planned) by more than one El Paso agency. The AFDC population is being served and clients are flowing easily from one agency to another. Besides having a positive effect on clients, agency coordination has also been beneficial for employees. Staff of the various agencies have been positively affected in numerous ways. For example, efforts to coordinate have "extroverted" their jobs and given them the opportunity to influence, shape and participate in a service delivery system that affects the community.

While El Paso welfare-to-work programs operated under the same state-level constraints that hindered intake and eligibility in other regions, they have managed to "smooth" the process. The *community-of-agencies* concept ensures that clients — regardless of their entry point — will progress through welfare-to-work programs and have access to all available services. When roadblocks arise, they are resolved to the fullest extent feasible. And when the solution is not all that it could be, they continue to perfect it (e.g., the DHS and PIC client status data exchange's progression from telephone to fax and eventually computer lines).

If there is any one component of the El Paso welfare-to-work programs that could be described as the cornerstone, it would be assessment which is clearly identified as the bailiwick of the Upper Rio Grande PIC. This is not to imply, however, that assessment is not an activity performed by other agencies. This is more aptly seen as a distinction between the level of assessment provided to all clients and the intensity of that service. TEC's role in the welfare-to-work network was to provide job search assistance to referred clients. As such, TEC's assessment was limited and directly related to assessing clients within the scope of job search activities. DHS provided limited assessment to all clients in terms of screening and categorizing, but only Category II clients received a more detailed assessment. And, in those cases where clients would benefit from JTPA services, the PIC's expertise in assessing clients was heavily relied upon.[63] The PIC's role is training and that may be the singular reason why its assessment process is the most in-depth and inclusive of other agency representatives (e.g., the Employability Development Team). It may also be the reason that inter-agency dissatisfaction with agency-specific testing instruments (e.g., the ABLE Screening Battery, TABE, APTICOM) was not a point of contention in El Paso. Nor, it should be noted, was widespread duplication in testing instruments an issue here. Though it was

[63]It should be noted that the PIC used the DHS case manager's earlier assessment in its process.

standard practice statewide for REFOCUS Category II clients to take the ABLE Screening Battery, El Paso left it to the discretion of the DHS case manager.

Although case management existed in a broad sense by virtue of the *community-of-agencies* approach, REFOCUS and other local welfare initiatives placed more emphasis on it at the agency level, especially at DHS. REFOCUS did not develop a "waiting list" of Category II clients in El Paso until recently. Though conclusions cannot be drawn at this point in time, one reason for this may be that DHS case managers were actually able to provide case management because of the existing agency network, thereby optimizing their time. If this assumption is valid, the implication of the current backlog may be that existing resources have been stretched to their limit. On the other hand, the delay in forming a waiting list in El Paso may have resulted from the manner in which outreach and scheduling were handled or simply a result of having the advantage of being able to benefit from the lessons learned from the pilot sites, such as San Antonio.

The level of inter-agency communication and knowledge of external programs was exceptional even though few of the agencies have structured, inter-agency reporting and accountability obligations (e.g.,TEC and DHS). Without exception, each agency was eager to point out the program accomplishments of others and was able to knowledgeably discuss the others' programs. Exchanging information and keeping the flow of communications open appeared to be a normal, everyday activity of welfare-to-work programs in El Paso. Though the bulk of inter-agency reporting and accountability that occurred was not required, it did not receive less attention when problems were perceived. One can point to many examples — the expedited referral initiative, creation of liaison positions, and the client status data (fax) exchange, to name a few — for verification.

It would appear that El Pasoans have accomplished a great deal on their own but they are quick to point out that the credit does not belong entirely with them. While the community-wide need to stretch limited resources and their remoteness from the other urban areas of Texas, particularly Austin, may have nurtured their ability to work closely and rely on each other; they feel their efforts have been aided by supportive attitudes at the state-level. This would include the blanket atmosphere created by state agencies indicating support for coordination and the willingness at the state level to learn from what is going on at the local level.

B. Houston

1. Service Delivery Areas, Organizational Structure and Staffing

The geographic area emphasized for the site visit was the City of Houston, yet the service delivery boundaries for the programs in this area are much broader. DHS Region 11 and TEC's Houston Region are coterminous and correspond to the 13-county State Planning Region 16 (Figure 3). This is the largest of the planning regions in terms of population with more than 3.8 million residents, nearly three-quarters of whom live in Harris County.[64] Its status as the most densely populated of the state's regions masks the fact that it is actually several very urbanized counties surrounded by a number of relatively rural ones.[65] Three JTPA SDAs operate in an area congruent with this region, the last two largely within Harris County: Gulf Coast, Balance of Harris County and the City of Houston.

DHS employment services in this region are primarily offered in Harris, Galveston and Fort Bend Counties. Outlying counties tend to have few employment and training resources (i.e., service providers) available to assist with serving AFDC clients. In 1986, Houston's FSS centralized its employment services programs into one local office, originally running the only such centralized REFOCUS program in the state. Decentralization of their operations began in February 1989 and now most local welfare offices play a role in REFOCUS. As in the other regions, FSS staff now have primary responsibility for employment-oriented programs, relying on Income Assistance staff for eligibility determination and Contracts staff for contractual support functions. According to DHS figures, Harris County contained about four-fifths of all relevant AFDC/REFOCUS clients in this region and about 56 percent of those actually profiled in the first year of operations.[66] Harris County is the state's largest in terms of AFDC caretakers, accounting for about one of every five caretakers in the state.

Worth noting here is DHS' North Star Local Office which, at the initiative of the local staff, is serving as a model for clients and staff. Experimentation with new approaches seems to be the rule here. Staff are allowed greater flexibility to determine what works best in serving clients, including extending office hours, opening on Saturdays, operating "quality circles", and conducting client satisfaction surveys. One feature of this office is the Rainbow Room, an on-site child care facility staffed by volunteers and JTPA trainees for use by clients visiting the office.

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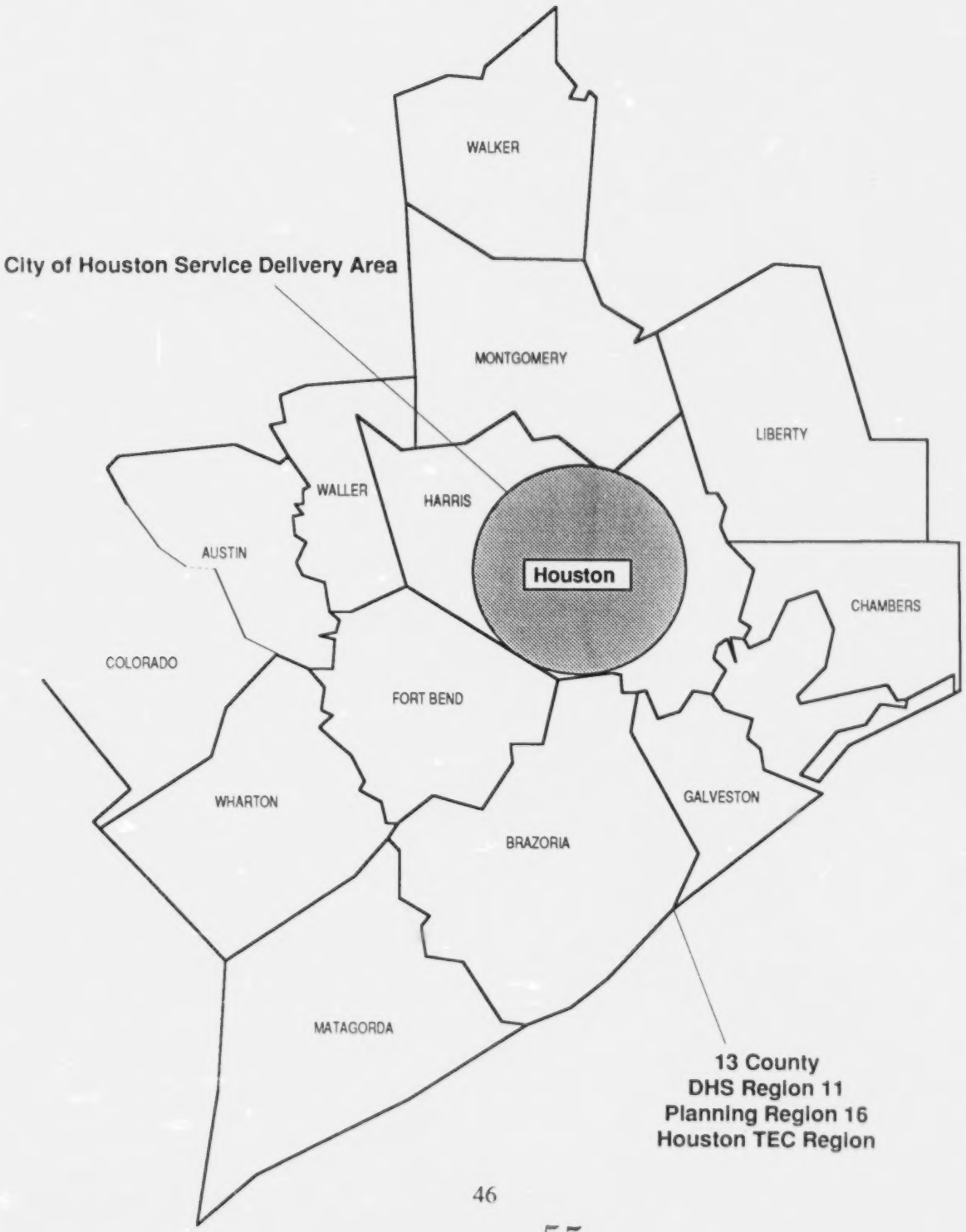
[64]Population estimates as of July 1, 1988. See: TDOC (1989).
[65]The most urbanized was Region 15 (SouthEast) where the entire population resided within the MSA (1980).
[66]DHS, REFOCUS Annual Report (1989).

Figure 3
Regional Boundaries
Houston Area



TEC has served AFDC recipients through WIN and REFOCUS contracts at a number of local offices in its Houston Region, but only in Harris County. The largest of these is the Austin Street Office in downtown Houston. Current staffing for AFDC-oriented TEC services is at 19: 12 staff for REFOCUS — down from the original 16; 2 for Job Search Workshops supported with Wagner-Peyser 7b monies; 2 for Project I-365 under contract to the PIC; and 3 for ACT, a local TEC program initiative to train and place AFDC clients in allied health careers.

In terms of annual JTPA funding, the City of Houston SDA — officially the Houston Job Training Partnership Council but also referred to as the Houston PIC here — is one of the nation's largest. It is the single largest SDA in the state. In terms of funding, Houston is more than twice the size of Gulf Coast and about three times as large as the Balance of Harris County SDA. The PIC serves as both the administrative entity and the grant recipient for the City's JTPA program, serving more than 12,000 participants annually in Title IIA and IIB programs with a staff of about 50 full-time equivalents (FTEs).[67] With the exception of two special projects, Projects Excel and I-365, all training is conducted through the PIC's network of almost 50 service providers. Thus, for the most part, the PIC allocates resources and provides critical direction and oversight to the subcontractors delivering employment and training services to residents. Even intake, eligibility determination and assessment functions are decentralized among the providers. While its service boundaries stop at the city limits, the Houston PIC has cooperative service agreements with the other PICs, by which it can serve up to a certain portion of participants from their areas without prior notice. However, this tends to be mainly an issue with Harris County since the areas of potential overlap with Gulf Coast tend to be more affluent.

Project Excel is an internally managed network of Computer Curriculum Corporation (CCC) learning labs which has been installed over the past two to three years, mostly in subcontractor sites. The PIC is ultimately planning to have several hundred computer stations operating in more than twenty locations around the city, including Project I-365 and schools in the Houston ISD. Project Independence-365, a joint welfare-to-work initiative of the PIC, DHS and to a lesser extent TEC, is described below.

Staff co-location among these welfare-to-work programs was relatively common in the past. Under the pre-1984 WIN program, TEC and DHS staff were frequently co-located. With the initiation of Project I-365, staff from TEC, DHS — both FSS and more recently IA — and Houston Community College (HCC) began officing together on-site in mid-1988 and continued

[67]The Title III (EDWAA) program for dislocated workers for this area is operated by the Gulf Coast SDA.

into 1989. At the East-Tex Local Office, DHS and TEC operations happened to be located on different floors in the same building. DHS has plans to juggle space commitments so that TEC staff who work under REFOCUS and AFDC-related contracts can be located in closer proximity for client convenience. These plans are hindered by agency procurement and leasing procedures. In addition, the PIC continues to outstation staff in Excel sites and at the Kay School, a Houston ISD facility for pregnant/parenting teens which currently enrolls girls in grades 5-12.

Over the 1985-1989 period, experience with staff continuity in key positions has been mixed in these agencies. TEC probably has exhibited the greatest staff stability of the three. The local TEC Program Manager responsible for program development and supervision of their welfare-oriented staff has been with TEC for 25 years, all of it in Special Programs and has been working with WIN and related efforts such as REFOCUS since 1971. The PIC Executive Director has been in the position since mid-1984, before which time he was a Division Director for ARMCO Steel/Houston for 28 years. The PIC staff person now responsible for I-365 and other contracts has been on-board for only a few years, although he has had extensive JTPA experience at the state and local level. The I-365 liaison has been with the program for just over a year.

DHS has experienced turnover in key, if not critical, positions in recent years for various reasons, while the REFOCUS initiative was getting underway. The Houston DHS Regional Administrator, after a decade in the same position in Dallas, took the position in January 1989 when the then-Administrator moved up to the DHS State Office. A tragic death left the FSS Regional Director position vacant in late 1988, after which it was occupied for a brief time by one other person before the current Director took a lateral move into the position.[68] Some of the regional and local DHS Program Directors and key FSS staff have been around for a number of years, but in other positions. The DHS staff which is part of I-365 has largely been with the project since its inception, and one of the key local DHS FSS program managers has been with employment services in the same office since 1972, beginning with the WIN program. But, generally speaking, DHS is experiencing high employee turnover recently in its local offices, in large part as FSS staff without social work or case management backgrounds who were initially hired to achieve "quick fixes" for clients in the form of immediate job placements are being expected to actively manage caseloads towards self-sufficiency over longer time frames. Turnover is also occurring among IA staff in the face of rapid caseload increases and more is expected as

[68]The director who died was in the process of leaving the position at the time. Key staff engaged in early REFOCUS planning are still very much involved in the Houston DHS office, including an assistant to the current CSS Regional Director and the CSS Program Director.

they take on more pro-active, employment functions in preparation for JOBS implementation in late 1990.

2. Overview of Houston's Welfare-to-Work Programs

There was considerable welfare-to-work activity going on in Houston in the 1985-1989 period, some state- and some locally-initiated. Major efforts to increase services for AFDC recipients and to promote their self-sufficiency are described here, beginning with REFOCUS and Project I-365.

REFOCUS. The Houston DHS Region was one of the REFOCUS pilot regions. Planning for the pilot project was largely conducted by DHS FSS program directors and supervisors at the state and regional level in the initial stages late in 1987 and very early in 1988. Representatives from JTPA and TEC were brought into this process only in the latter stages when implementation was imminent, or, as PIC staff commented, REFOCUS basically "happened to the PIC." Actual enrollment of clients began in April 1988, although the program apparently spent much of the next year working out the details and trying to restore referrals to earlier levels. Houston was a highly visible pilot site in part because it is the hometown of the current DHS Board Chair. Program components which later found their way into the statewide design were tried out here, including the volunteer mentoring program, Texas Works Together.[69]

In February 1988 before REFOCUS started, DHS ceased referrals to TEC and JTPA under the existing WIN program. TEC's existing contract continued in place during this period although DHS referrals of Category I clients did not resume until September 1988. JTPA also experienced a reduced flow of AFDC clients as DHS began to structure and control the referral process. The PIC now serves around 17-19 percent AFDC recipients in Title IIA programs, down from over 20 percent pre-REFOCUS. But, only about one-fifth of the AFDC recipients served in JTPA are referred from REFOCUS. The rest are either directly recruited from DHS local offices through flyers and other devices or are enrolled by the PIC and its numerous subcontractors as "walk-ins." It should be noted that this takes place with the active cooperation and support of DHS. DHS eligibility workers often make referrals and verify benefit receipt to JTPA for all of those served.

Project Independence-365. Planning for Project I-365 appears to have begun prior to public discussions of REFOCUS.[70] The PIC was frustrated with what they perceived to be

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[69]There was little mention of the mentoring component or its contribution to the overall effort in these interviews.

[70]Also see: Trutko et al (1990); Whitlow and Fernkas (1990); and Wicinski (1990) The name derives both from the program goal (client independence) and from the number of days the PIC expected treatment to take. PIC staff now joke that the project should more realistically have been named I-730 at least.

inadequate service to and performance for AFDC clients on the part of their providers despite considerable efforts to remedy the situation, including technical assistance to providers and the offer of service and performance cash bonuses with no apparent results. Planning for I-365 expanded to include other program staff, and the project quickly evolved into a joint effort of the PIC, DHS and TEC, with limited involvement by HCC as well.[71] The PIC has continued to serve as the lead entity. The goal of the program is "... to help participants achieve economic independence, which requires building self-esteem and becoming emotionally independent." The PIC views I-365 as a laboratory for learning about the AFDC population directly and experimenting with more effective approaches to serving them. When Houston was selected as a REFOCUS pilot site and DHS planning surfaced, the PIC adapted its project plans to fit. Thus, much of the impact on PIC programming, structure and staffing has resulted from I-365. This also appears to be the case for TEC in Houston although to a lesser extent.

Project funding, with the exception of DHS' contribution of staff, is provided exclusively by JTPA. Staff salaries, facilities rental, TEC and HCC participation is fully JTPA-financed. The project operates with an on-site staff of 10 FTEs, including two trainers (one each from JTPA and DHS), three DHS case managers, two TEC employment counselors, a GED coordinator, a half-time HCC instructor and a student aide. The PIC has its own liaison to the project, and both TEC and DHS provide some supervision of their own staff as well. This staff co-location arrangement has been in place since November 1988. I-365 is the PIC's front-line capacity for serving more motivated REFOCUS Category II clients. Note that the DHS local office from which referrals were made was located directly above the I-365 offices until recently.

Key elements of I-365 appear to be: selection of highly motivated individuals from within the pool of Category II clients; a co-located, team approach to program staffing; intensive counseling and case management by DHS and other staff; the use of peer group support; blending of staff identities to the extent allowable; comprehensive aptitude, interest and academic assessment; further sorting of program treatment by client skill levels; long-term remediation and vocational skills training; the provision of support services when needed. The private sector is involved in I-365 to some extent through the Texas Works Together mentoring component and through the involvement of individual PIC members.

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[71]There is debate locally about I-365's origins and whether REFOCUS or I-365 came first. No attempt is made here to sort through this debate since it would appear to make little difference. The I-365 proposal seems to have originated with the DHS Family Support Regional Director who was also an active PIC member at the time.

OTHER LOCAL INITIATIVES

In addition to REFOCUS and Project I-365, several other local welfare-to-work initiatives were operating in Houston during this period. These are presented briefly in chronological order. Other collaborative efforts now appear to be blossoming in the area but are not described here.[72]

Project TEAM. Project TEAM began in response to the state-initiated Teen Parent Initiative and operated under the auspices of the Urban Affairs Corporation.[73] It targeted black teen parents from Houston's Fifth Ward, an impoverished inner-city area. Over the three years of operation most participants were black (88 percent), never married (91 percent), nonpregnant parents with at least one child who were either still in school (39 percent) or had dropped out with no degree (44 percent). Interestingly, the most common referral sources for participants were other project participants, friends and family (together, 47 percent), the health service (19 percent) and school (11 percent). DHS only accounted for 6 percent of participant referrals, yet roughly half of all participants were receiving AFDC.

Project TEAM staff from the Urban Affairs Corporation provided a full array of services in a structured program sequence with intensive staff contact. Seven of the eleven full-time staff had substantial case management responsibilities. Participants averaged 30 hours of required activities per week and also had the advantage of peer support groups. The average monthly enrollment was around 230 participants. Due to the Corporation's financial difficulties, DHS ultimately terminated its portion of the contract in May 1988. Non-DHS funded components of the project continued through the end of the summer of 1988 at which time Project TEAM ended.

AFDC Service Requirements. None of the PIC's subcontractors serve AFDC recipients exclusively. However, even before AFDC service goals were instituted as part of the State's PY1988 Title IIA planning guidelines, the Houston PIC had such requirements for its subcontractors. In recent years, some providers reached AFDC service levels as high as 75 percent. SER and Computech are providers which have effectively served higher numbers of AFDC recipients. Still, it was frustration with low AFDC service levels and the generally poor performance of subcontractors which ultimately led to I-365.

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[72]These include: a joint PIC/DHS/ISD/private sector project serving mainly young AFDC caretakers or the children of AFDC recipients based in Wheatley High School; and The Next Step, a PIC-funded effort in a northeast side housing project to train and place neighborhood residents, many of whom are on AFDC and/or Food Stamps. These projects began in 1990 and were beyond the period studied.

[73]This description is based on DHS (October 1989).

ACT and ACT II. AFDC Career Training (or ACT) is a TEC-initiated, JTPA-funded project which started operating in 1989 to recruit and train AFDC clients for rewarding health careers. TEC recruits AFDC clients directly from local DHS offices by flyers, encouraging them to arrange an appointment to meet with TEC staff. Clients are assigned to one of two TEC counselor/case managers and administered the longer version of the TABE test to determine their functional levels and whether they are in need of additional remediation and survival skills training. If so, they attend an on-site CCC lab monitored by a PIC-funded trainer and a half-time HCC instructor before they can enter longer-term vocational training at HCC.[74] HCC further tests the clients using the ASSET test to determine reading and math levels and then provides semester-based courses lasting as long as 12-18 months in a number of allied health careers — e.g., health care assistant, LVN, ward clerk, EKG, phlebotomist, and pharmacy technician — with starting wages of at least $6 an hour. About 80 clients have enrolled in ACT, of whom 30 are still in remedial education, 13 are in vocational education, 2-3 have dropped out and the rest are in training. It is still too early in the program cycle to have placement results.

ACT recently became ACT II with the addition of the CCC lab in return for TEC's agreeing to serve additional numbers of AFDC clients and to link up with REFOCUS. TEC has full access to REFOCUS Category I clients through its existing contract with DHS and can serve Category IIs as well, although emphasis is placed on recruiting clients with a high school diploma or a GED. TEC certifies clients for JTPA eligibility, and participants are eligible to receive support services (e.g., child care) from JTPA. Plans call for ACT II to expand from the existing three up to six staff positions in the near future. Despite the project's success in bringing together these three agencies to provide AFDC clients with long-term health career training, there have been problems with client testing and HCC coordination, both in-house, between its Remedial Ed and other departments, and out-house, between HCC and the other participating agencies. The other participating agencies would like to see HCC shed its long-standing emphasis on semester-based courses in favor of more open-entry/open-exit offerings.

3. Welfare-to-Work Client Flow

Houston's welfare-to-work programs function in a very decentralized environment. The impact of this feature is most evident in the job training and placement programs for welfare recipients given DHS' reliance on those systems for services in the face of severe resource

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[74]They now (1990) have an HCC aide as well assisting with the provision of remedial education and GED prep along with survival skills training. This position is funded with Wagner-Peyser 7b funds as part of the AFDC Job Search Workshops.

limitations. The Houston PIC finances both job training programs and some of the job search and placement services provided through TEC for these clients. In addition, it has necessarily fallen into the role of funding support services such as child care and transportation which has traditionally been DHS' domain. This has an effect on client flow which depends on whether they are in a target group and on which of the categories they have been sorted into.

Targeted Category Is. Those AFDC recipients who belong to one of the target groups and who are classified by DHS FSS workers as Category I clients based on the EP-2 (GWS) are referred to TEC for job search services. As Category I clients they do not receive DHS case management services. Job search assistance is provided under the regular DHS REFOCUS contract and/or through Job Search Workshops supported by TEC 7b funds.[75] While participating in the program, clients are eligible for DHS-funded child care and transportation assistance — if funding is still available. This has been a serious problem recently. During REFOCUS' pilot phase there was a separate appropriation for child care which was not renewed subsequently.

In addition, nothing precludes targeted Category I clients from going to JTPA directly instead of relying on TEC services. With Houston's very decentralized JTPA delivery system, clients are free to go to any of the PIC's many subcontractors as a "walk-in" and receive the same services any eligible participant would receive. Unless provided by the contractor, they still would not have the benefit of DHS case management, but they would have access to PIC-funded child care (via the broker contract with Neighborhood Centers, Incorporated, or NCI) and transportation as would any JTPA participant in need. This route to getting services on the part of Category I clients is a common one. Clients might also respond to flyers displayed in local DHS offices and contact TEC to sign up for the ACT program. Recall that ACT asks for volunteers with a high school diploma or GED.

Targeted Category IIs. There are several alternate routes for targeted Category II clients as well. All start with DHS local offices where FSS staff call in clients targeted for REFOCUS services. FSS staff conduct orientation sessions about the programs for Category IIs. From here there are at least three main routes as follows: recruitment and referral to Project I-365; assignment to a DHS case manager from whom they might then receive referrals to specific JTPA providers or HCC for services; or assignment to a status which might be called "waiting-for-case-management." All Category II clients are slated for eventual assignment to FSS case managers for help in arranging for services.

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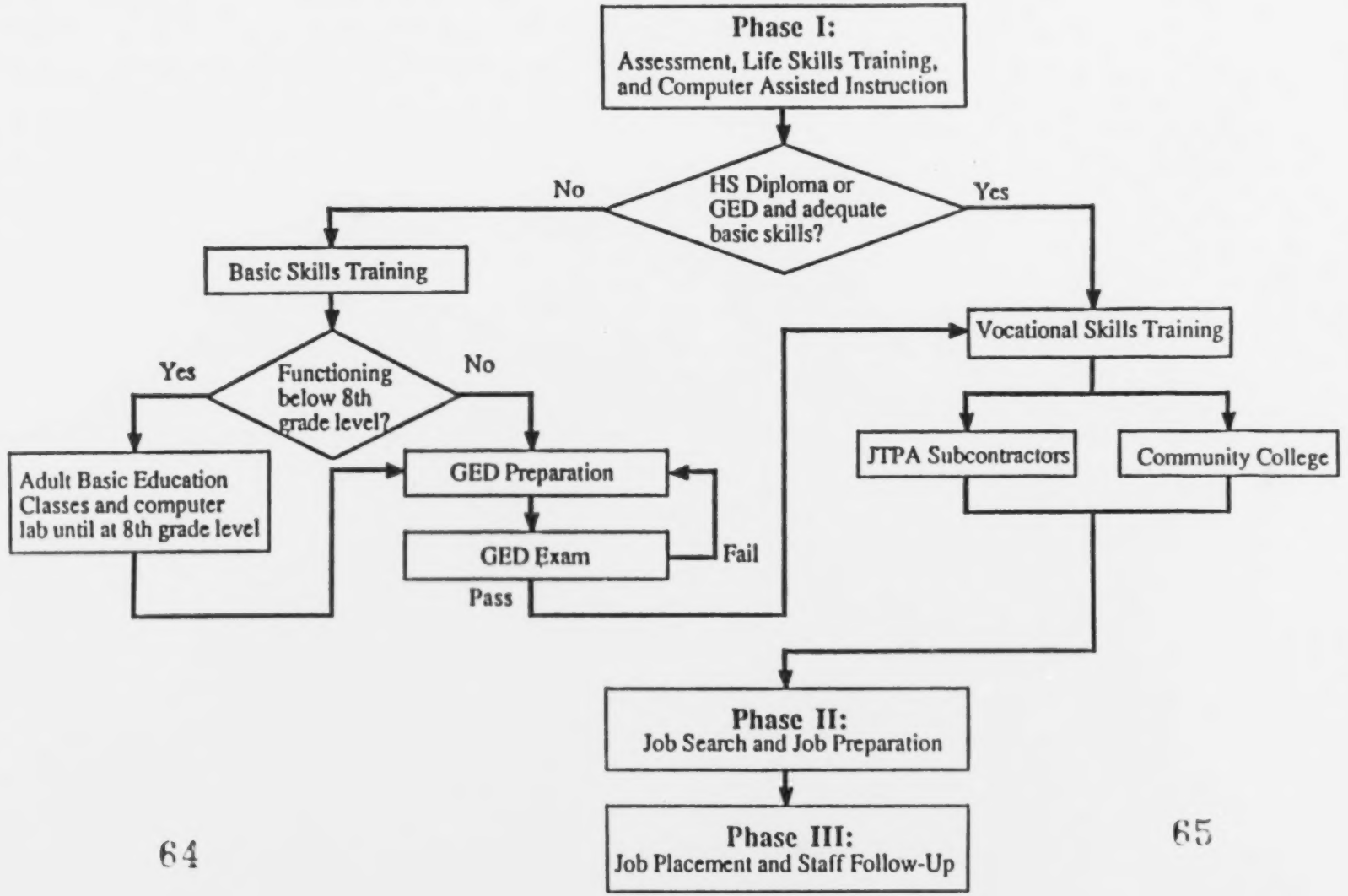
[75]Again, of the 19 TEC employment services positions for serving welfare recipients, 12 are explicitly dedicated to serving Category I clients: 12 DHS contract positions and 2 TEC 7b slots.

- *Project I-365.* FSS (now CSS) workers outreach AFDC recipients and schedule orientation workshops to explain REFOCUS. At this time trainers from I-365 make their "pitch" to eligible Category IIs to induce them to volunteer for the project. Only the most motivated of the Category II clients — the "cream" — are eligible for participation in I-365. The additional I-365 criteria are: not pregnant or planning to be; over age 17; reading at the 6th grade level or better; no more than two preschoolers; enrolled in no more than two prior vocational training programs; and living in the City.[76] I-365 currently accounts for fewer than 10 percent of all AFDC recipients served by the PIC, although it probably represents a much higher portion of all REFOCUS Category II clients served. The trainer screens the clients and prepares their paperwork before sending them on for I-365 intake. Unmotivated clients or those who are found to be ineligible for I-365 are either sent back to DHS or on to other PIC subcontractors.

Client flow through the three phases of I-365 from this point is illustrated in Figure 4, Independence 365 Client Flow. Once enrolled, clients are assigned to one of the on-site DHS case managers who conducts the initial interviews, assists with arranging support services if needed, schedules assessment (testing and evaluation) by TEC counselors and schedules Phase I of the program. TEC assesses clients based on an interest/values inventory, an aptitude/ability assessment and levels of academic achievement. The assessment results are shared with the assigned DHS case manager and the JTPA coordinator. Those clients with below-6th grade literacy are referred to contractors for literacy training before they can continue in I-365, a program segment not captured in the figure. Clients with adequate literacy levels participate in Phase I of the project including Life Skills Training (personal development, trust building, motivation, assertiveness, self-esteem building, etc.) conducted by the I-365 interagency training team, computer assisted instruction (via the on-site CCC lab) and continuing assessment. The curriculum for this phase has been jointly developed based on in-house materials from DHS and JTPA as well as some of the modules used by DHS' private survival skills trainer.

[76]These additional criteria were established to help the PIC with meeting JTPA performance standards.

Figure 4
Project Independence - 365 Client Flow



One of the more interesting aspects of the program occurs here. At the end of the 2-week Phase I component, staff from each of the agencies — the DHS case manager, the TEC counselor, JTPA trainers, and possibly the GED coordinator — come together in what is called a "staffing" to put together an overall assessment of the client's situation and needs leading to a consolidated Employability Development Plan. This collaborative approach to developing the EDP, which is then negotiated between the DHS case manager and the individual client to outline the goals and objectives and the course of action for the coming months, constitutes exemplary coordination between the agencies participating and is a powerful tool.

In addition, there is a program element which is not readily apparent from the flow diagram. I-365 — and the PIC itself — tends to function with what the Executive Director calls an "open door" policy, so that clients are made to feel welcome in the offices and are encouraged to drop in at any time to discuss issues with the staff. This seems to have produced several intangible benefits. First, DHS case managers essentially are allowed to share the burden of their work with JTPA and TEC staff who also function as client advocates and case managers in their own right. Second, as clients share their problems and concerns, the staff from the various agencies are "forced" into a closer working relationship in order to share information and to keep the client's program on track. And, third, clients generally become more open about their needs and wants and tend to develop close relationships with others in their group. This client bonding appears to create lasting support relationships which reinforcing the staffs' efforts.

At this point in the flow, clients with a high school diploma or GED and who have adequate basic skills are referred out either to other PIC subcontractors or to HCC for vocational skills training, carrying with them the JTPA eligibility documentation and a referral form which has been completed by the DHS case manager with input from the JTPA project coordinator. Such training may last for months depending on the career they are being trained for. During skills training: DHS supplements child care and transportation (if needed); DHS case managers monitor and document client progress, troubleshooting with the JTPA coordinator; JTPA pays for child care, transportation and other support services as needed; and the client also attends self-directed job search training conducted by I-365 or subcontractors. Increasingly, I-365 has taken over payment for child care via JTPA funding

through its contract with NCI. This is in direct response to the uncertainties of DHS child care funding and difficulties it created for effective client participation.

Clients without a diploma, a GED or basic skills are channeled into basic skills training within I-365. Most I-365 clients are deficient in basic skills and take this track. If they are functioning at very low levels in terms of basic skills, they may take ABE classes and work on their skills in I-365's CCC lab until they function at least at the 8th grade level. If they are already at that level, they proceed directly to GED preparation until they obtain a GED. With GED in hand, they proceed to vocational training as indicated above.

Phase II typically begins once the client completes vocational training and either begins intensive job search, enrolls in OJT or finds unsubsidized employment. This Advanced Life Skills Training Phase incorporates job search skills, workplace survival skills, begins management skills for independent living (e.g., budgeting, parenting), and offers career exploration. Once employed in unsubsidized employment, the client enters Phase III which continues the emphasis on independent living skills with group support, mentoring and counseling on day-to-day problems. DHS case managers ensure that transitional benefits (i.e., child care and Medicaid) are arranged as appropriate. Phase III clients are also encouraged to return as peer mentors to help motivate those just beginning Phase I.

- *HCC or Other JTPA Providers.* Category II clients not eligible or not interested in volunteering for I-365 but who have been assigned a DHS case manager proceed through the regular REFOCUS sequence which entails assessment (including ABLE Screening Battery) and referral to HCC, JTPA providers and others as suggested by the assessment. Clients are referred to JTPA with joint referral forms. Case managers continue to track their participation and ensure that necessary support services are provided.

- *Waiting-for-Case-Management.* The third route for targeted Category II clients is easy to understand but more difficult to track. It may be the most typical route to services for these clients. Clients who have been categorized but told to wait for a case manager often circumvent the structured DHS referral and case management process altogether, opting instead to go directly to JTPA providers in their community. Given their obvious motivation, these clients are eagerly welcomed by Houston's JTPA providers. Such clients may not receive the case management

which DHS might have provided them, but the PIC will pick up the tab for child care, transportation and other services as needed in any event as they do for any participant in similar circumstances. Some might also contact TEC about participating in the ACT program.

Targeted Category IIIs. Target group members which are determined to be Category III clients are provided the basic Houston-area Information and Referral (I&R) packet which lists resources they might want to take advantage of. Case management and support services such as child care and transportation assistance are typically not provided (although DHS will provide services to targeted Category III clients who actively participate in training). Clients may also be referred to ABE or GED providers. These clients are then left alone until reassessment a year later.

Non-Targeted Clients. Clients who are not members of any of the designated target groups are not outreached by DHS at this point and so are not categorized. They might proceed as "walk-in" clients, self-referring to TEC, ACT or other JTPA providers. DHS case management is not provided for these non-target group, uncategorized clients.

Several issues need elaboration here before examining support services. The first of these is client assessment. There are several different types and levels of assessment going on in Houston welfare-to-work programs. DHS FSS workers currently perform an initial screening of target group members, categorizing the clients outreached by means of the EP-2 (GWS). In addition, Category IIs receive a more in-depth assessment including the ABLE Screening Battery test — which virtually all parties now agree tends to overstate clients' actual functioning levels by 1.5-2 full grade levels (compared to TABE results). The joint DHS/JTPA referral form includes the results of these tests. Clients referred to I-365 go through elaborate testing of aptitudes, interests and basic skills before undergoing a lengthy assessment process involving multi-agency staff. The Houston PIC has felt that DHS' categorization and assessment process to be inadequate and now requires all contractors serving AFDC clients to conduct a Basic Skills Assessment in addition to whatever DHS does. TEC further assesses clients enrolling in ACT using the longer version of TABE, while HCC administers the ASSET test. Thus, there is considerable duplication of effort in assessment at least as experienced by the AFDC clients themselves.

Secondly, there are issues surrounding case management as it is now structured. DHS/FSS staff are responsible for case management of REFOCUS Category II clients only, with a maximum caseload of 55 cases per month by State DHS policy.[77] DHS case managers at I-365

[77]During the site visit, DHS staff explained that informal word had come down that there would no longer be any cap on caseload size, that case managers were to handle all comers in effect. Simultaneous with this change was the

are currently carrying 60 cases per month, all of whom are Category II clients which they can informally share with TEC counselors and JTPA staff in terms of responsibility. The DHS paperwork documentation burden remains theirs alone, of course. Cases are defined as a mix of actives (enrolled and actively participating), inactives ("pending" for up to six months with health, transportation and/or family problems) and post-placement cases (contacting once per month for up to 180 days following placement to check barriers, refer to community services and track transitional benefits). After the 180-day point, the child care contractor (NCI) takes over tracking for transitional child care benefits and DHS/IA workers handle the Medicaid side. Specific case management issues identified include:

- The PIC and DHS seem to have different philosophies of case management. The PIC view is that, done properly, it should manage clients out of the system, while they are concerned that the DHS concept tends to be more procedural, one of managing the paper. DHS case managers themselves described the allocation of a typical day as follows: 50 percent client interaction; 45 percent documentation; and 5 percent staff interaction.[78] Yet, with REFOCUS and the coming of JOBS, case management for DHS is still in an evolutionary stage. As local FSS staff put it, the difference between case management under WIN in the early 1980s and REFOCUS/JOBS more recently is that, before, the case manager was in charge; now, the client is.[79]

- State DHS policies on case management documentation seem onerous, particularly in I-365's interactive environment with staff from many agencies and clients in and out constantly. Case managers must document all "major" client interactions on a 4-page form, in addition to writing client-specific narratives. These requirements were eased somewhat for I-365, yet some of the attempts at relaxation have not worked here for reasons which appear to have much more to do with the breadth of DHS responsibilities for clients and with confidentiality and reporting issues than with case management per se.

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accompanying tightening in the time for getting all case-related paperwork current: all documentation would have to be updated within 3-5 working days.

[78]Time spent on each of these activities would vary with the experience level of the DHS staff. More experienced case managers would presumably be able to minimize documentation and maximize client interaction time.

[79]DHS State Office staff indicate that the situation is more balanced under REFOCUS and JOBS, with the case manager balancing client assessment results, program service provider availability and the demands of the labor market on the one hand with the clients wishes on the other. The case manager and the client jointly decide the course of action to be pursued with considerable guidance from the case manager.

The I-365 staff collectively developed a single form to substitute for an existing one in order to more easily meet each agency's needs. All of the other agencies bought off on the substitute, however, DHS did so only as an additional form. DHS had to choose between omitting key information on the client and her family due to privacy concerns and its irrelevance to the focus of the programs in question, or providing it and running straight into invasion of privacy problems. DHS case managers not only must handle client labor market barriers but also problems which may stem from physical or child abuse, health and other factors, not all of which can be readily shared with staff from other programs and agencies. Needless to say, this issue applies to all areas of the state, not just Houston. The intensity and proximity of Project I-365 served to highlight it more than in the other two sites.[80]

- Contacting clients takes an inordinate amount of time in a congested urban setting like Houston where the population is moving around within extended structures of family and friends and often lacks telephones: one (attempted) in-home visit if required might well consume the better part of a case manager's day here.[81] Such problems make participation in regular on-site duties — and effective participation in a coordinated program — difficult with barebones staff complements.

- Participation in a project like I-365 inevitably results in additional duties for case managers (and for others as well). Here DHS case managers actively participate in "staffing" sessions, maintain JTPA-required statistics (with recently-provided assistance from the on-site DHS supervisor) and numerous other tasks.

4. Support Services

Support services arrangements, particularly for child care and transportation, are relatively straightforward in Houston. This is not to say that child care, transportation and other services are not a problem for some clients, just that systems for providing for them have been developed and appear to be functioning. Each is discussed separately.

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[80]We are indebted to the Houston DHS Regional Office staff for this insight and for helping to articulate the nature of these client/case manager interactions.

[81]Rural areas may produce similar time effects for case managers because of distance. Rural areas have not been examined in this study to date.

Child Care. As has been the case elsewhere, child care availability generally does not appear to be a barrier to program participation in Houston.[82] There are very real concerns about the quality of the care available, as well as about the availability of shift and sick-child care. Basically, any participant in Houston's JTPA program can get child care in their own neighborhood if it is needed for program participation. This is the case whether the participant is a welfare recipient or not, a REFOCUS referral or not, and so on. According to the PIC, only about a fifth of those receiving child care assistance under the NCI contract are AFDC recipients. There is no participant co-pay requirement.

Even before Project I-365, the PIC initiated a child care broker contract with NCI to handle in-program care for the area at least partially as a result of its frustrations with the vagaries of DHS child care funding.[83] The PIC's annual contribution of $1.0 million (from Title IIA) represents about 90 percent of the total contract amount for I-365 participants. The remainder is largely DHS Title XX funds. (DHS' total contribution to the NCI contract to provide child care for AFDC clients is around $5 million in Title XX funds.) NCI is what DHS calls a "mega-broker" for child care, operating with five funding streams. DHS funds all transitional child care (i.e., post-placement) via NCI. One of the more significant problems affecting DHS child care resources is that it is also responsible for funding slots for income-eligible clients, i.e., those with sufficient earnings to be ineligible for AFDC yet low enough to qualify for child care assistance. These clients tend to "occupy" a child care slot and keep it for long periods of time. The result is that DHS funds and child care slots cannot stretch very far and, in particular, cannot provide much help with in-program care.

It should be noted that the situation for AFDC recipients participating in TEC job search services is more uncertain. For clients served by TEC staff through the auspices of the I-365 and ACT programs, in-program care can be provided if necessary through JTPA's contract with NCI. However, Category I clients being served in the REFOCUS or Job Search Workshops are in more tenuous circumstances given DHS funding problems. TEC staff indicated that DHS child care funds for their clients had run out twice since REFOCUS began in Houston. The situation for walk-ins is certain — and bleak.

Transportation. Houston has a moderately well-developed system of public transportation (i.e., buses) and private taxicabs, but suffers from the sheer size and spread of the city. This is

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[82]See MDRC's report on child care in California's GAIN program: Martinson and Riccio (1989).

[83]The special REFOCUS child care appropriation from the Texas Legislature was only for the first year of operations in the pilot sites.

particularly a problem for welfare clients, since they tend to live large distances from most program sites and from potential jobs. More than the cost of transportation, time is a critical factor. There is no transportation broker in Houston analogous to NCI for child care. Both DHS and the PIC provide transportation assistance to AFDC recipients while they are participating in welfare-to-work programs. Those participating in regular JTPA programs — whether welfare recipients or not — or in I-365 are provided bus tokens or allowances where no bus routes exist. The PIC relies on regular Title IIA funds for transportation assistance. PIC staff estimate that two out of three classroom training participants received transportation aid of some sort. DHS provides bus tokens to I-365 participants and also offers assistance to recipients participating in TEC programs (i.e., REFOCUS and Job Search) through a petty cash system which apparently has worked well in the past.[84]

Other Support Services. I-365 participants also have access to a Clothes Closet which offers donated clothing. DHS I-365 staff initiated the Closet and have continued to stock it. Clothing has been obtained through clothes drives in DHS offices, and a number of PIC members have contributed as well. The aim of the Clothes Closet is to ensure that participants appear "suitable" while in training, searching for and working on the job, thus removing another barrier to success. DHS staff have proposed that new clothing be provided as a reward to I-365 completers. Some PIC subcontractors also help with clothing for AFDC clients.

5. Reporting and Accountability

The reporting situation for these welfare-to-work programs provides insight into the nature of coordination here. Each system has its own separate reporting forms and maintains its own MIS. From the employment and training side, there are no set reporting systems for REFOCUS clients served: responsibility for obtaining information about these clients (e.g., activities in which participating, program results, etc.) rests with the DHS. However, there is a great deal of regular, verbal contact between the staffs of these separate agencies, especially in I-365. PIC and TEC staff alike reported regular, verbal contact with the DHS Regional Director for FSS. In the intense, single-site setting of I-365, communication among the staff and supervisors is constant and packed with information about the clients and their progress.

However, there have been problems with reporting and communications in I-365, some of which are probably inherent in the programs themselves. Staff attempts to reduce paperwork by designing a consolidated EDP encountered serious difficulties as described above. Given the very

[84]Recent State DHS rules governing the use of petty cash were cited as a potential problem.

sensitive information which DHS must maintain on its clients (e.g., instances of child abuse), the extent to which seemingly duplicative recordkeeping and reporting can be reduced among these agencies is unclear. Even if it could be reduced, it is not obvious that it is desirable. Again, this issue is not unique to Houston. It simply stood out here due to the nature of Project I-365.

The emphasis on outcomes in REFOCUS is strong in many respects. Yet, in terms of measuring participant performance in the near- or longer-term, REFOCUS offers little. As DHS implemented the program, it did so on a pilot basis, dropping the factors which had been used regularly to gauge local performance. Nor does I-365 have any established standards of its own. However, TEC does face performance expectations in the form of placement rates, etc., which have been incorporated directly into both its DHS REFOCUS contracts for serving Category I clients and in its non-I-365 JTPA contracts. It should be noted that JTPA programs live with performance standards — complete with an incentives and sanctions system — which identifies welfare recipients as a special target group with its own separate standards. Thus, to the extent that the PIC is the major funding source (i.e., mainline JTPA Title IIA) for employment and training services for AFDC clients here, the ultimate degree of accountability is high, even if it is not shared fully among the other agencies. By providing so little in the way of financial support for the effort, DHS also finds itself in an awkward position for demanding accountability for its clients.

One of the more significant issues which surfaced in discussing program accountability is relatively obscure but has wide-ranging implications for the ultimate effectiveness of Texas welfare-to-work programming. DHS, as a large state agency, labors under a highly-structured system of rules and regulations, including those for reviewing and rewarding personnel. Each employee — case managers are no exception — has a DHS "4040" which spells out the factors which are the basis for their annual performance review. Unfortunately, despite attempts by regional and local DHS to modify the 4040's for their I-365 staff, on-site case managers are still consumed by the need to document all client interactions in great detail, to the point that paperwork and process fills nearly half of a typical day, or almost as much time as they spend actually working with clients. While the other programs — JTPA and TEC — feel that the DHS staff are effective with clients and genuinely committed to I-365 and its goals, they also feel that they are hamstrung by the very real need to make sure they cover their personnel bases; i.e., especially in the current environment with DHS layoffs and budget stringency, DHS employees must first do what their 4040's demand of them.[85] What is being described here is an inter-organizational

[85]Note that there are choices here. They can ignore their own best interest (the 4040) in favor of the program and the client and hope for the best; they can work with clients all day and take care of paperwork after hours, without pay of course; or they can play within the rules. The first is personally risky; the second is good for the client but

mission and goals conflict which stems from inconsistencies between the stated program objectives and staff expectations within DHS. The end result is not good. With several years of I-365 experience under their belt, it is unclear what the PIC gains from continuing to work with DHS staff on-site compared to what it would be from hiring its own, less-constrained case managers, particularly when the it is already serving the target group (REFOCUS Category II clients) and picking up the tab for most child care and transportation assistance costs.

Finally, it should be noted that a point of irritation with DHS which the other agency staffs mentioned frequently was that coordination was made far more difficult when the staff from the agency — more IA than FSS — were "always in meetings" and could not be reached for days on end. Coordination is difficult without regular communication. The latter begins with accessible staff who can participate and make decisions.

6. The Impact of REFOCUS and Other Initiatives

There were only two major welfare-to-work initiatives in Houston which affected substantial numbers of AFDC clients and which survived the study period relatively intact: REFOCUS and Project I-365. The ACT program has potential but is still young and relatively small. As in the other sites, the impact of REFOCUS was felt mostly within DHS itself, in that it largely changed the agency's own internal procedures for outreaching, screening, sorting and referring AFDC clients. It did not substantially add to the resources available for serving AFDC clients, but instead has relied largely on JTPA funding — even for child care and transportation assistance — and on donations and volunteers from the private sector. What it has done is to restore the emphasis on case management — for a select group of clients only, Category IIs with some recent work experience and moderate education and training needs. Case management was once a vital part of the early WIN program. As local DHS staff pointed out, under REFOCUS, it is the client, not the case manager, who is the driving force in the case management process this time around. And, as DHS has plunged into the initiative with case managers as client advocates, it has become more outward-looking than before. It has had to be: it needs the services of JTPA in particular to carry out the employability plans for these clients.

What is very difficult to gauge is whether the effects observed in Houston were resulting from REFOCUS or Project I-365 implementation. As indicated, just determining which initiative came first in Houston is not easy. I-365 appears to have brought about more change, affecting more agencies, probably because the PIC pumped in new monies explicitly for this purpose and,

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leads to staff burnout and turnover; the last leaves the program with, in effect, a half-time case manager from the program's perspective.

thus, could drive the other systems in the direction desired. The fact that it did so with staff concentrated in a single site and operated with an open, inclusive management style probably contributed to its impact. I-365 was also the main area capacity for serving Category II clients with employment and training services. What remains to be seen is whether the enhanced levels of coordination from these initiatives can be maintained over time as JOBS enters full-scale implementation. One key to this will be whether additional DHS resources can be found to help with support services.

7. The Nature and Degree of Coordination

In terms of planning for welfare-to-work programs in Houston, more coordinated efforts are certainly going on now than in the past. Aside from the structured interagency planning process for the first year of JOBS which has just begun, there appears to have been progress made in involving staff from other agencies over the period examined. Both the planning for REFOCUS and for Project I-365 — which seem to have converged to some extent as I-365 became an important vehicle for serving Category II clients — started as in-house exercises and then were broadened to bring in key actors from the other programs involved. From the DHS side, it appears that this was more of a tops-down process, while the PIC handled I-365 as more of a tops-down/bottoms-up affair. TEC tends to be handled by both DHS and the PIC more as a contractor than a player. Except for recent efforts with a local high school (i.e., Wheatley High) and JOBS planning, education has not been an active partner. Educational entities have been far more involved in planning under JOBS, including regional TEA staff and representatives from educational coops (ABE) and community colleges.

In terms of operations, a number of key program functions need to be highlighted. The recent state-level agreement to use a joint AFDC/JTPA referral form and to share information has the potential for significantly simplifying the intake and eligibility determination of welfare clients in JTPA. This has been a bone of contention which has hindered coordination between the programs around the state, not just in Houston. But, the overall picture of the referral and intake process which emerges is of a very large, disconnected non-system. REFOCUS has attempted to rationalize the process from the DHS side, better sorting clients according to a number of criteria and then referring them to appropriate programs for services. However, given the funding and staffing constraints DHS must work against here, the numbers of clients who actually enter JTPA as direct REFOCUS referrals is quite small. Most AFDC clients in JTPA — close to four out of five — continue to be "walk-ins" not REFOCUS referrals, even two years after the pilot effort started. It is not clear whether the degree of coordination can be increased much here since DHS is not facing a rosy scenario for additional resources and JTPA remains very decentralized in the area

of intake and eligibility determination. Again, TEC performs basically as a contractor for most key functions, whether to DHS for REFOCUS Category I to JTPA for Category I (ACT) and Category II (I-365) clients. Walk-ins at TEC simply get the basic services anyone else would receive.

Assessment has received a great deal of attention in Houston. DHS continues to give all REFOCUS clients in the target groups an initial screening and to provide more complete assessment for Category II clients, yet as the system actually operates, other programs (and DHS staff as well) give it low marks. ABLE Screening Battery is roundly discounted since it produces education levels which are typically 1.5 to 2 years above comparable TABE, BOLT and other scores. TEC found the short-lived Category I definition which prevailed in the first half of 1989 to be closer to reality; those clients with both high school education levels and recent work experience tended to be "job ready" while the old-and-current definition yields a client group which really is not. The result is that JTPA and TEC subject clients to further assessment to determine the appropriate treatment. In I-365, the "staffing" approach which is used seems to yield good results for the program, staff and clients.

Aside from the old WIN experience, case management is a relatively recent program dimension in Houston. Under REFOCUS, Category II clients can be assigned to DHS case managers who are only able to provide actual client-oriented activity for about half of each day. Many end up waiting for a case manager to become available and go to JTPA and/or TEC through the back door. Along with Category I clients, they receive services without the benefit of case management. In I-365, the "cream" of the Category IIs gets the best of all worlds, essentially having access to what the staff describe as an "extended family" of case managers which includes DHS own case managers, TEC counselors, HCC/PIC GED coordinators and DHS/PIC trainers.

In terms of actual program services, the picture is blurred. The central issue here is whether it counts as coordination when TEC tests, counsels and offers job search/placement services to AFDC clients only under contract to either DHS or JTPA. The nature of the relationship changes when the entity is mainly providing services to a specified group under tight specifications for pay. Recall that even the TEC staff at I-365 are fully paid by the PIC. The same can be said for HCC education services except that HCC is providing a staff person to the project. DHS provides case managers for selected clients and modest, unpredictable funding for child care and transportation, but what else is it able to bring to the program relationship, except for large numbers of clients needing services, many of whom JTPA ends up serving in any event? The PIC now pays for most in-program child care and transportation costs, as well as education, training and job search assistance. There is considerable coordination in the provision of program services, particularly in I-365, but there is an imbalance in the relationship.

There is considerable room for improvement in coordinating reporting and accountability among Houston's welfare-to-work programs. The bright spot is found in the I-365 program, although even there, it has apparently been difficult for the agencies to actually reduce duplication and eliminate seemingly duplicative paperwork requirements. As indicated, these problems may be inherent in the programs themselves. There seem to be problems with setting performance expectations which extend consistently from top to bottom within DHS programs. Overall, since the Houston PIC is funding most of the program activity (via Title IIA funds) for at least the Category II REFOCUS clients — either through I-365, other contractors or TEC — the programs are operating within the JTPA performance management system.

Staff opinions concerning coordination in these programs appear to be in line with a more structured examination. Coordination is definitely seen to be improving, and this may produce real benefits in terms of JOBS planning and implementation. The program and staff relationships developed in REFOCUS and Project I-365 should be valuable assets if they can be maintained and nurtured. Moreover, most of those interviewed felt that coordination generally was low or poor in the non-I-365 programs for welfare recipients in Houston, while they felt that it was moderate ("so so") in I-365. All of those interviewed saw real benefits — for the programs and the participants — from more effective coordination. In terms of the coordination continuum, Project I-365 is beginning to approach shared control, while most programs in Houston are more likely to be found near the middle of the line, somewhere between regular information exchange and consultation.

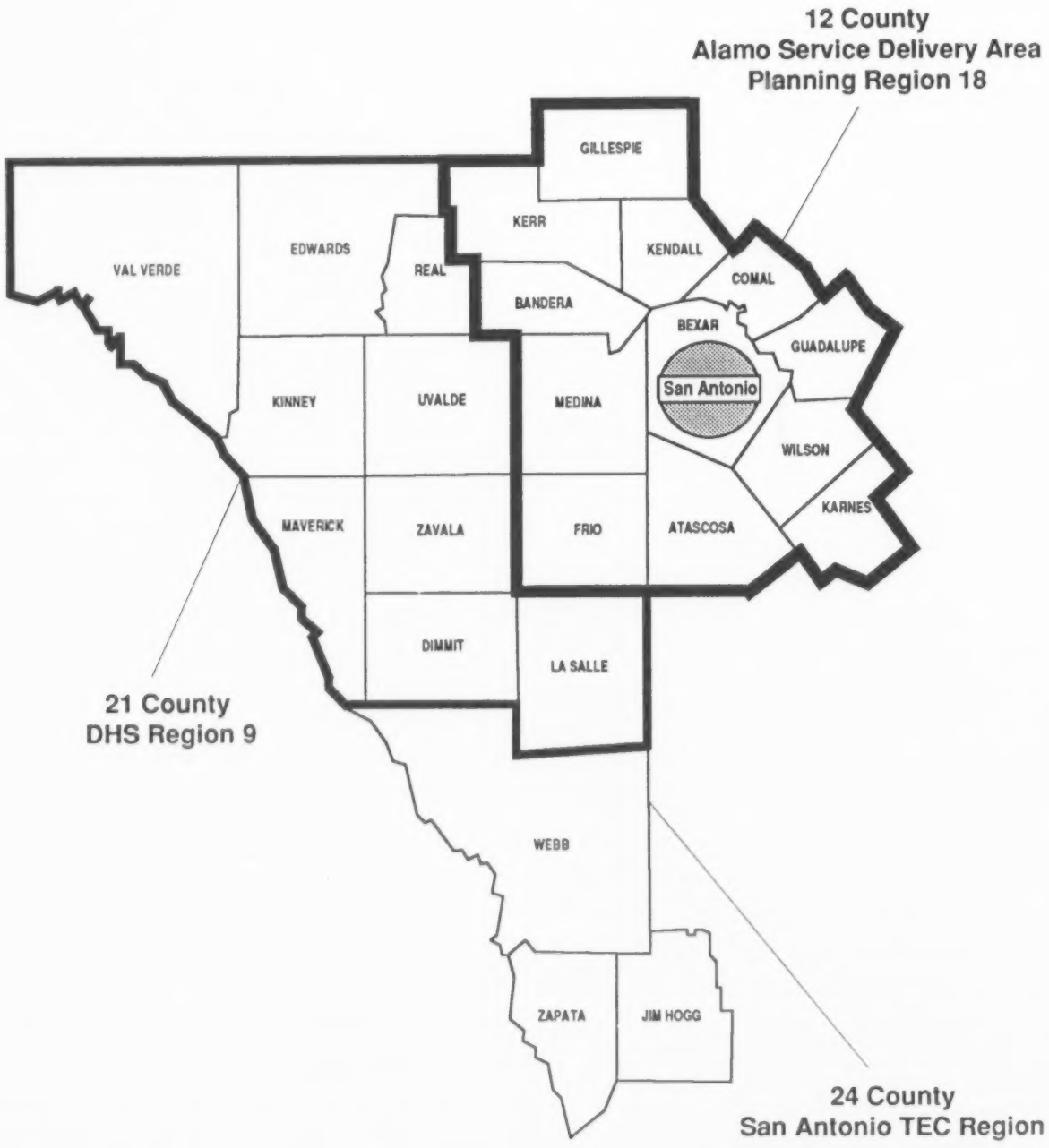
C. San Antonio

1. Service Delivery Areas, Organizational Structure and Staffing

This site visit focussed exclusively on services delivered within Bexar County, particularly the City of San Antonio. Yet, as in the other visits, the service delivery boundaries for area programs here extend much beyond Bexar County (Figure 5). DHS Region 9 is a 21-county area corresponding to State Planning Regions 18 (Alamo) and 24 (Middle Rio Grande). This is an odd combination of planning regions. Alamo, the third largest planning region, is highly urbanized and relatively densely populated, while Middle Rio Grande is the smallest planning region and completely non-urban with very low population density.[86] Bexar County tends to dominate the

[86]Population estimates as of July 1, 1988. See: TDOC (1989). The rest of the information concerning the regions was taken from Pluta et al (1984).

Figure 5
Regional Boundaries
San Antonio Area



DHS San Antonio Region, containing more than 85 percent of the population within the Alamo region. Nearly 90 percent of the people in the two planning regions live in the Alamo region. Two SDAs operate JTPA programs in this DHS Region: Alamo, which serves the 12-county Planning Region 18, and Middle Rio Grande which serves the 9-county Planning Region 24. TEC has the most extensive service boundaries. Its San Antonio Region encompasses not only the 21-counties covered by DHS and the two SDAs, but extends as well to include three of the four counties of the South Texas Planning Region.[87]

DHS employment services are offered throughout the region but tend to be concentrated heavily in only a few, of which Bexar, Val Verde, Maverick and Atascosa Counties are the largest in terms of the number of REFOCUS clients actually profiled.[88] As with the other two sites examined in this report, the outlying counties tend to have few employment and training resources — i.e., service providers — available for serving AFDC clients. According to DHS figures, Bexar County contained three-fourths of the AFDC/REFOCUS clients in this region and about two-thirds of those actually profiled in the first year of operations. It is the state's second largest county in terms of AFDC caretakers, accounting for about 10 percent of the total.

Within its San Antonio Region, TEC has served AFDC caretakers under both WIN and Job Search contracts (e.g., Food Stamps) with DHS, but REFOCUS services have been offered only in Bexar County. In terms of welfare-related contractual positions, TEC currently has 11 staff positions funded by DHS to serve REFOCUS Category I clients and 23 positions for the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program also funded by DHS. Another four positions are supported by Wagner-Peyser 7b funds to provide Job Search Seminars (the "RES" program) for AFDC caretakers. With the exception of two Food Stamp positions, all are located in Bexar County. Currently, these AFDC-oriented staff report to TEC's Area Manager of Special Projects, a non-DHS-funded position. Thus, of the more than 50 positions reporting to the Area Manager, roughly two-thirds are funded by DHS. As such, the Area Manager spends the majority of her time on DHS-related programs.

The Alamo SDA with over $20 million in PY 1989 JTPA funding is one of the largest in the state, second only to the City of Houston. In PY 1988, some 12,000 participants were served in its programs. JTPA's administrative arrangements in San Antonio differ substantially from

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[87]The South Texas SDA is coterminous with this planning region. Starr is the only county not included in the San Antonio TEC region.

[88]For these figures and the ones that follow, see DHS' REFOCUS Annual Report (1989). Only Bexar and Atascosa are within the Alamo Planning Region/SDA.

those in the other two sites and from most others in the state. The City's Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) with around 40-50 full-time staff serves as both grant recipient and administrative entity for the entire 12-county SDA. The 10-member PIC staff carries responsibility for policy development and oversight, including directing the process for allocating resources among the more than forty service providers.[89] Note that most of these providers operate within Bexar County; the Alamo Council of Governments (COG) is the sole contractor in the outlying 11-county area. DEED, which had served as the host entity for employment and training programs since CETA, is basically the administrative arm of JTPA here, including the region's Title III EDWAA program, administering and monitoring contracts. Although the Alamo PIC incorporated in PY 1983, its staff continued to be supervised by DEED until 1987 when the PIC hired its own Executive Director and split away from DEED. The PIC hired the former director of the Texas SJTCC as its Executive Director; he was the prime force behind implementing welfare initiatives on the JTPA side. As in Houston, the Alamo PIC operates all of its programs through an extensive network of service providers. It does not provide training or other services in-house.

Staff co-location among these programs has recently begun again after a hiatus of several years. Under the WIN program in the 1970s, TEC and DHS staff were often co-located. At the initiation of the former FSS Regional Director, co-housing of eleven TEC REFOCUS staff positions began again in January 1989 in DHS local offices. Co-housing of TEC Food Stamp workers began in February 1989 in those same DHS offices. There are plans to expand this effort to seven DHS offices (from the current four) in the near future, and as DHS expands to new locations, so will TEC. Staff co-location efforts seem to be confined to TEC and DHS staff.

Over the 1985-1989 period, experience with staff continuity in key positions has been mixed among these agencies. TEC has been the picture of stability and continuity among the programs. TEC's current Regional Director has been in the position since mid-1986, before which he was Assistant Regional Director for five years. He has been with TEC for more than twenty years, all but two of them spent in San Antonio. The TEC Area Manager for Special Projects — which encompasses AFDC/Food Stamp programs as well as employment services, unemployment benefits and veterans services — has been in her position for three years, before which she was a local office manager operating these programs for ten years.

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[89]Technically, there have been separate PIC and DEED staffs for employment and training programs since the CETA program of the mid-to-late 1970s. However, under CETA and for the first few years of JTPA, the PIC and DEED staff were co-located and there was even considerable staff overlap with the current DEED Job Training Coordinator directing both staffs. The substance of this relationship changed markedly in PY 1987 when the PIC hired its own Executive Director.

However, the prime movers behind San Antonio's entrance into REFOCUS and related welfare-to-work initiatives were DHS and JTPA, not TEC. Several individuals were key on the DHS side. The FSS Regional Director who led the drive for REFOCUS in 1987-1988 and who shaped many of the key program decisions for the area, had been in the position for roughly five years before leaving in 1988 to take a promotion as Assistant Regional Administrator for DHS' Midland/El Paso Region. The current CSS Regional Director in charge of employment services has been in the position for a little over a year, before which time she was the San Antonio Regional Director for Support Services (including Personnel and related areas) for more than ten years. The FSS Program Director who had over 14 years of experience in DHS employment and training programs in San Antonio and was heavily involved in implementing REFOCUS in-house, transferred to IA in May 1990.

While many of the JTPA staff have remained in the program in one position or another, there has been considerable discontinuity in key staff positions. Again, the PIC director who was hired in 1987 and was personally involved in initiating and planning much of the REFOCUS effort in San Antonio left at the end of 1988. The PIC's senior planner who had been with the PIC since CETA and who had also actively participated in REFOCUS planning, took over as Acting Executive Director for a time but went on extended medical leave shortly afterward (July 1989). The PIC's current Acting Director who also had exposure to the REFOCUS planning process took over in May 1990, having been the PIC's senior planner since early 1989 and a planner since early 1988. Before that time, he was on the DEED staff as a project management specialist with responsibility for monitoring JTPA contracts. Moreover, on the DEED side, while the Job Training Coordinator has been with the program since CETA, a number of the positions have been vacant for months, including the Employment Development Manager position immediately above the Coordinator which has yet to be filled since its creation two years ago. The state of flux which has characterized both the PIC/DEED relationship and staffing in key positions has made JTPA's role in REFOCUS and now JOBS tenuous. It is worth noting here that the discontinuity evident in the programs may be in part a reflection of the overall environment in San Antonio. In recent years, there have been major, continuing changes in city hall from the Mayor on down the line.[90]

2. Overview of San Antonio's Welfare-to-Work Programs

Aside from the regular services provided through JTPA programs and TEC contracts, there was little in the way of coordinated welfare-to-work activity or special welfare initiatives in San

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[90]A major shake-up involving several longtime city officials occurred during the site visit.

Antonio in the period studied (1985-1989). The most visible initiative to increase services and promote the self-sufficiency of AFDC caretakers here was REFOCUS.

REFOCUS, THE INITIAL STAGES

As one of the initial pilot sites, DHS Region 9 staff recalled that implementation of REFOCUS was only one facet of the changes taking place in the welfare-to-work program environment. With the implementation of REFOCUS, the procedures for documenting program activity were also revamped. Program implementation and planning actually involved two distinct phases: automation and service delivery. The automated system — the Automation/Streamlining System for Information and Service Tracking (ASSIST) — was designed by the DHS State Office based on pioneering efforts in Region 10 (Beaumont), to serve as the data system for FSS. In April 1987, the preliminary stages of ASSIST implementation were initiated in the San Antonio Region to manage outreach and document client activity. Regional staff spent the following year or so running trial tests and working out the bugs in the system with assistance from the State Office. By the fall of 1987, a regional plan for delivering REFOCUS services to clients within Region 9 had been developed by staff through a tops down/bottoms up process. All FSS units within the region were involved, as were all levels of employees, inclusive of clerical staff.[91] Scripts for staff to use in rehearsing their new roles were written and resource guides outlining available community services were prepared and tailored for use by each unit within the region. In addition, all staff went through training. TEC staff were invited to attend the training sessions and were in attendance at some of the sessions. The San Antonio DHS staff was one of the first to go through training. While the initial staff training was felt to have been very effective, the regional staff also felt that supplemental training — which was not received until much later — would have been beneficial earlier in the program's phase-in.[92] Although feedback from San Antonio helped streamline future sessions, changes in training coursework were not always readily conveyed back to the pilot site for the benefit of local staff.

The existing intake mechanism for the WIN Demo program was shut down in February 1988. Outreach for REFOCUS started slowly in March 1988. On March 31, 1988, the first intake session for clients responding to the REFOCUS outreach took place. Although training in case management had occurred, the transition from the immediate placement emphasis of WIN Demo was not easy. It was difficult for FSS staff to shake their old habits, and there was a tendency to

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[91]To some degree, planning and implementation of REFOCUS was felt by staff to have been more extensive in its involvement of workers at the unit level than current efforts for JOBS. As JOBS progresses, these views may change.

[92]An in-house trainer for the San Antonio FSS staff was hired in 1990.

try to move clients off caseloads too quickly. To counteract this situation, regional administration instituted a new procedure that required a supervisor's approval before a case could be closed. Also, case managers were routinely encouraged to make home visits as opposed to simply classifying clients as inactive. In retrospect, administrative staff felt that the initial build up of Category II caseloads occurred too slowly. It was felt that subsequent resistance to the maximum caseload level of 55 could have been lessened if caseload levels had been increased quickly rather than gradually.

Initially, outreach was handled from a central location. Then, to allow staff more flexibility and control in managing their caseloads, unit staff were trained to key in their own outreach letters. While this measure enabled staff to affect the flow of clients, it did not overcome the inability of REFOCUS to control client levels by category. The lack of educational data on clients during the implementation of REFOCUS adversely affected client flow.[93] Although DHS was committed to referring predetermined numbers of Category I clients to TEC, it had no way of knowing the composition of clients outreached by category prior to administering the EP2. As such, any given outreach effort might result in disproportionate numbers of any one category. This problem must have affected other sites as well but was not mentioned.

One particularly noteworthy component of the PIC's efforts to address the needs of the welfare population programmatically was its expansion of two of the existing Learning Centers in 1988 to serve REFOCUS clients. The PIC utilized JTPA Section 123 Education Coordination monies to augment funding available to the two Learning Centers, one operated by San Antonio College (SAC) and the other by SER-Jobs for Progress (SER). Both operated an open-entry/open-exit program providing services such as pre-adult basic education for clients whose educational levels were too low for entry into the Learning Center's regular programs (pre-ABE), adult basic education (ABE) and English-as-a-Second Language (ESL). Self-paced programs in both centers used computer-assisted instruction to prepare clients for a GED or to upgrade their skill levels. Their primary purpose was to provide the academic/basic skills training required to prepare clients for enrollment in regular JTPA programs.

Overall, AFDC clients targeted for services exhibited lower educational levels than expected. Many clients still needed more than the six weeks of services that were usually provided by either of the two JTPA-funded Learning Centers. In addition, the provision of educational services to REFOCUS clients experienced another set back when the flow of JTPA funds to the Learning Centers for remedial education was temporarily delayed. To some extent, this adversely

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[93]DHS began collecting educational attainment data for all AFDC caretakers in September 1989.

affected the referrals from DHS to the Learning Centers, a referral pattern that has not yet been entirely repaired even though the present capacity of these educational services goes unused.

Initial contacts with agencies outside of DHS were made by the FSS Regional Director. The greatest involvement occurred with TEC as a result of their contractual relationship. TEC staff became involved in REFOCUS planning roughly six months prior to the start of their REFOCUS contract in September 1988. TEC staff did participate in DHS-sponsored training sessions and also received training provided by TEC.[94] Although DHS had an existing relationship with the Alamo PIC, the intensity of that relationship increased significantly with the advent of REFOCUS. In Fall 1987, the PIC became involved in REFOCUS planning, initially involving only the Executive Director and eventually including local service providers such as the Learning Centers. Eight to twelve non-financial agreements that outlined either client flow patterns or intentions to coordinate were developed between DHS and JTPA service providers. A Resource Program Director was hired by FSS to cement the existing relationships with agencies and to continue developing external contacts to improve the referral and feedback mechanisms. Presentations and marketing of REFOCUS by FSS staff occurred within DHS, with other agencies and also the general public. Videos were prepared so that information on REFOCUS could be easily disseminated. And, during and after start-up, AFDC clients who were involved in REFOCUS were profiled on local television stations providing widespread, favorable publicity for the program. But even so, as implementation of REFOCUS continued, the most visible problem was that the mechanics of processing clients outpaced the resources available for meeting client needs. In business jargon, program marketing had gotten ahead of production.

OTHER LOCAL INITIATIVES

While other collaborative efforts now appear to be developing in the area, these are not described here since they occurred for the most part after the period studied (1985-1989).[95] Those initiatives that originated at the state level (e.g., 7b-funded Job Search Seminars and DHS PIC membership) are covered in the earlier section.

Women's Employment Network. In 1985, DHS approached the Women's Employment Network, a 7b-funded project serving single-parent heads of households, in an effort to secure

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[94]TEC staff received additional training in case management in Fall 1989.

[95]These include: local efforts to fund teen parent programs through FY 1991 Teen Parent Initiative monies; provision of basic education services by TEA at Mitchell, a local DHS office and two housing projects for AFDC clients; and the Comprehensive Services Design, a collaborative effort of multiple agencies spearheaded by DHS and two City Council members that will design and develop programs located in housing projects for improving employment and training services to Category I and III clients.

additional training for AFDC clients in job finding skills. Through a contractual agreement with DHS, the Women's Employment Network provided job search assistance and placement services to a designated number of AFDC clients in the 1985-1986 period. After complying with the initial agreement, the contractual arrangement was not continued.[96]

Hard-to-Serve Bonus Incentive. In 1988, the Executive Director of the Alamo PIC implemented a cash incentive program using unallocated Title IIA monies, authorizing an incentive bonus for JTPA service providers placing AFDC clients. In addition to the single unit cost, JTPA service providers were paid $200 for each AFDC placement and an extra $250 if the client's wage exceeded $4.30 an hour. The primary objective of this incentive was to open up a referral mechanism that would encourage community-based service providers to send clients to one of the two JTPA-funded Learning Centers (that were expanding to serve REFOCUS clients) and also to accept referrals from the Centers. The target population of this incentive program was later expanded to include dropouts and other hard-to-serve groups.

3. Welfare-to-Work Client Flow

Like Houston, San Antonio's welfare-to-work programs functioned in a very decentralized environment. The impact of this feature was most evident in the job training and placement programs for welfare recipients given DHS' reliance on those systems for services. Within the Alamo SDA, each JTPA service provider was responsible for recruitment, eligibility, intake, orientation, assessment, case management, placement and follow up. As such, the client flow for AFDC clients in JTPA differed for any given provider. With more than 40 JTPA service provider contracts, it is not practical to describe each provider's client flow here. But it should be noted that roughly four out of every five AFDC clients receiving JTPA services were non-REFOCUS participants. The client flow for the typical participant entering through DHS depended on whether they were in a target group and into which of the three categories they had been classified. Recall that under REFOCUS, DHS outreached AFDC clients by target group — initially based on age and duration on welfare, and more recently based on the federal JOBS target groups — and categorized them into three categories.[97] Initially, DHS outreach was handled centrally. Then, to allow DHS staff more flexibility and control in managing their caseloads, staff were trained to key in their own

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[96]In 1990, a portion of the REFOCUS employment services provided by TEC to Category I clients was contracted to other agencies. The Women's Employment Network was awarded the service contract for the west side of San Antonio.

[97]Basic differences between this system and that prevailing under the preceding WIN Demo program have been described in the state-oriented sections above.

outreach letters. Those clients responding were scheduled for orientation where they were categorized using the EP2.

Targeted Category I Clients. Category I clients were referred to TEC for job search and related counseling services if they resided in Bexar County.[98] (Category I clients from rural areas were usually referred directly to ACOG.) As Category I clients, they did not receive DHS case management services. Category I clients were, however, eligible for DHS-financed child care and transportation assistance while participating in the program. During the pilot phase of REFOCUS, the typical conflict as to each agency's (DHS and TEC) perception of a job-ready client arose as did TEC's concern that they would have to register any and all clients referred.[99] To alleviate these concerns, a compromise was reached that a pre-registration assessment — with input from TEC, DHS and the client — would be conducted to evaluate a client's willingness and readiness to work. This joint assessment involving interaction with DHS technicians and TEC case managers would occur prior to the client's enrollment in TEC services and only when TEC case managers questioned the willingness or job readiness of referred clients.

Category I clients were referred to TEC in groups and were first given a general presentation on the program. At this time, individual interviews were also scheduled to discuss the program further. After the initial interview, clients decided whether or not they wanted to continue in the program. If they decided to continue, TEC staff might schedule up to three additional interviews before a final decision was made to accept the client. Up to six weeks might pass while this process was occurring. Once registered for the program, clients were counseled by TEC staff and, beginning in late Fall 1989, a case management approach was used to work out any barriers that the client encountered. This included assisting clients in creating an EDP that could be revised throughout the client's participation in the program. Some clients also received a week of half-day job search sessions. Typically, TEC staff carried a caseload of roughly 20 active clients. Clients would stay in the program until they had held a job for at least 30 days. Placed clients were reassessed at 60- and 90-day follow-ups.

Staff co-location was an important feature of the TEC-DHS relationship in Bexar County. Initiated in January 1989, co-location of TEC personnel in local DHS offices has been given the credit by both agencies for significantly increasing the referral rate. However, interaction between DHS and TEC case managers has been limited, since Category I clients who composed the bulk of the TEC caseload did not have access to individually-assigned DHS case managers.

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[98]TEC services provided to REFOCUS clients were governed by a contract similar to that under WIN.

[99]These concerns were magnified when the agreed upon number of referrals to TEC by DHS could not be met during the pilot phase.

In addition to the sequence just described, nothing precluded Category I clients from going to JTPA directly instead of relying on TEC services. With San Antonio's decentralized JTPA delivery system, clients were free to go to any of the PIC's 40-odd subcontractors as "walk-ins" and receive the same services any other eligible participant would receive. As in Houston, this route appears to have been a common one for Category I (and other) clients.

Targeted Category II Clients. Targeted Category II clients were assigned DHS case managers whose role was to assess the client, assist in formulating goals and explore vocational possibilities. Case managers were responsible for assessing clients' educational and training needs and for referring clients to appropriate providers. While the assigned case worker was the sole person working with the client, "staffings" did occur. These "staffings" were viewed as team efforts to help the client by getting input from other services inside and outside DHS.[100]

All Category II clients were tested by DHS using the ABLE Screening Battery, a screening instrument developed by San Antonio-based Psychological Corporation that tested for life experiences and which was first piloted by DHS locally. Here, as in other parts of the state, the ABLE Screening Battery was not the test of choice for the other agencies.[101] Both JTPA-funded Learning Centers, the normal JTPA point-of-entry for Category II clients, used TABE. As DHS and JTPA service providers within the Alamo SDA continued to rely on different tests for assessing REFOCUS clients, they found that the ABLE Screening Battery produced scores consistently above those from TABE. This discrepancy was readily acknowledged by DHS and JTPA providers, and test scores were to be adjusted accordingly. In spite of this verbal understanding to account for test score discrepancies, there was no indication that it led to a reduction in client re-testing by the agencies. Additionally, the ABLE Screening Battery and TABE were not the only testing instruments being used to assess clients. JTPA's Centralized Assessment Program which was located at Goodwill used the Wide Range Aptitude Test (WRAT). However, use of the Centralized Assessment Program did not appear to be widespread by DHS or even other JTPA service providers due to problems with its location and the structure of the arrangement.[102] Under CETA, the Centralized Assessment Program had been operated by Goodwill but physically

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[100]The frequency and value of these "staffings" are unknown. Staffings were only mentioned briefly by one interviewee.

[101]A known exception was the Middle Rio Grande PIC which comprised the western portion of DHS Region 9. The Middle Rio Grande PIC also used the ABLE, thereby avoiding retesting when REFOCUS clients were referred to them.

[102]When the Centralized Assessment Program was established at Goodwill Industries, the intent was that it would become the central intake point for most of the disadvantaged participants. While none of the other providers were contractually required to use the services offered by Goodwill, the program was an attempt to standardize the assessment of the PIC's clients so that more effective program treatments could be provided for local residents.

located in another building. When the program was moved into the Goodwill building, clients were not as willing to use the service. Additionally, the other providers were reluctant to send many clients to Goodwill for fear they would "cream" those so referred since Goodwill not only assessed but also served clients in its own program offerings. A similar problem was described in relation to the two JTPA-funded Learning Centers.

After testing, the usual path for Category II clients involved participation in a survival skills course, remedial education at one of the Learning Centers (if needed) and referral to a JTPA provider. In San Antonio, the survival skills workshops were "adopted" by the Southwest Business and Professional Women's Organization. This non-profit community organization was helpful in securing donations such as snacks and clothing for participants in the workshops. After attending the survival skills course, clients that would benefit from additional education were referred to one of the two Learning Centers operated by SAC and SER for pre-ABE, ABE and/or ESL services. These self-paced programs tried to provide the basic skills required to prepare clients for enrollment in JTPA.

Although both Learning Centers mainly served AFDC recipients, REFOCUS clients comprised roughly 60 percent of the SAC enrollees and less than 10 percent of SER's. But, enrollment of Category II clients in these Centers was not automatic. Each Center had its own in-house assessment team and conducted its own testing of clients. While participation by DHS case managers was encouraged, it rarely occurred. Two weeks prior to a client's graduation from the SAC or SER Learning Center, DHS case managers were contacted. It was at this point that a problem was apt to surface, stemming in part from the numerous client assessments performed independently by the various agencies and from the competitive nature of the employment and training environment. For various reasons, clients exiting the Learning Centers often had changed their minds as to the goals outlined with their case managers. This resulted in a problematic situation with several dimensions. Clients were viewed as fickle even though enrollment at the Learning Centers had potentially broadened their exposure to existing resources and bolstered their confidence in their own potential; DHS case managers were viewed as inflexible if they continued to adhere to the previously developed career plans even though in some instances the client's wishes may not have been feasible within the REFOCUS guidelines; and JTPA providers were viewed as self-serving for actively and aggressively recruiting REFOCUS clients to fill slots in their own programs even though recruitment was the service provider's responsibility. To resolve the problem — after it had occurred — a joint assessment was conducted to reassess and incorporate changes into the client's career plan. Efforts to alleviate the problem by instituting a joint assessment earlier in the cycle were not evident.

DHS case managers could also obtain JTPA services for their clients without going through JTPA providers. DHS case managers could send a client "buy-in" request directly to DEED enabling participants to attend courses at area proprietary schools. This approach did not appear to be widely used. In addition, as with Category I clients, nothing precluded targeted Category II clients from going to JTPA directly instead of relying on a DHS referral from REFOCUS. Category II clients who had been categorized but told to wait for an available case manager often circumvented the structured referral process altogether, opting instead to go directly to JTPA providers in their neighborhood. Given their obvious motivation, these clients were welcomed by JTPA providers in San Antonio.

Targeted Category III Clients. Initially, target group members classified as Category III clients were provided the basic San Antonio-area I&R packet listing resources such as remedial education and health services. However, shortly after REFOCUS started, services to Category III clients were expanded. Three nurses from Family Health Services within DHS started screening selected Category III clients to assess the extent to which health limitations affected their employability. This service was offered only at the Brady DHS Office in San Antonio. Case management and support services such as child care and transportation assistance were not provided to Category III clients as a part of REFOCUS. Unless these clients entered the welfare-to-work system at an entry point other than DHS, they were left alone until reassessment by DHS a year later.

Non-Targeted, Walk-In Clients. Clients outside the designated target groups were not outreached by DHS. If they requested DHS employment and training services, they were given an I & R packet. In the early stages of REFOCUS, some of these clients were mistakenly referred to TEC which resulted in their being confused with Category I clients. This situation was quickly resolved. DHS case management and support services were not provided for non-targeted, walk-in clients as part of REFOCUS.

4. Support Services

Child care and transportation were the primary support services available to welfare-to-work clients in San Antonio. Although other services were not routinely provided, they were procured for clients as feasible. Moreover, at the staff-client level, many instances were cited in which employees had gone to great lengths to assist clients with needs not readily addressed by any one program.

Child Care. DHS provided in-program child care services through two types of facilities: contract and provider. Contract facilities were non-profit organizations that were paid a flat amount regardless of the level of client use. Provider facilities were for-profit entities that billed DHS directly based on client enrollment. The main source of funding for DHS in-program child care was Title XX, supplemented by a onetime appropriation from the Texas Legislature. AFDC clients in employment programs were second in line behind Child Protective Services cases for DHS-provided day care with priority being given first to Category II clients, then to Category I clients. Non-REFOCUS clients were referred directly to a contract facility. When REFOCUS clients entered a JTPA program, child care might also be provided by the JTPA provider with Title IIA or other funds. Otherwise, DHS would continue to pay for the service. Prior to 1989, the decision to provide child care services was made by each JTPA subcontractor. After reviewing their records, the Alamo PIC concluded that most service providers did not offer child care services even though its absence was widely viewed as a serious barrier to effective program participation. Thus, in 1988, the Alamo PIC issued an RFP seeking a broker to arrange child care for JTPA participants. In September 1988, DEED entered into a contract with the YWCA to provide a broker system for child care. Participants are referred to the YWCA by JTPA service providers with space being allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.[103]

Staff opinions as to the need for additional child care services in San Antonio varied widely. In general, there was agreement that more non-traditional child care such as night or sick-care was needed. However, in terms of regular daytime child care, most felt that sufficient services were available, while others saw a desperate need for more slots. Those who felt that sufficient services were available pointed to the cultural preference of San Antonio's predominantly Hispanic population to rely on extended families and friends for such care. Also, several sources stated that most, if not all, of the time the child care needs of outreached AFDC clients were being met, emphasizing that it would have been rare for a client to have experienced a delay in receiving employment services due to a lack of child care. On the other hand, those that indicated there was an inadequate number of day care slots felt that less than one-quarter of the actual need was being met.

Transportation. Public transportation in San Antonio was uniformly described as very good. The only exception cited was service to the outskirts of San Antonio which was not as good as inner-city service. However, even with a very good public transit system, AFDC caretakers

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[103]Although details were not readily available, the YWCA-based brokerage system appeared to be in jeopardy. Indications were that the system's resources had been depleted more rapidly than expected.

were still likely to experience some difficulty in transporting children to day care and arriving at class or work on time. Complete reliance on the public transit system would also preclude seeking employment in areas outside the system or with infrequent service. DHS transportation resources were routinely provided to Category II and I clients, the later via TEC. Title IIA monies were also used by JTPA service providers for transportation support services. All participants, REFOCUS and non-REFOCUS alike, were eligible to receive bus tokens and gas money provided by JTPA. In general, DEED encouraged JTPA providers to limit transportation services to the first two weeks of training. But, since JTPA providers were paid according to a single-unit charge, the actual mix of services provided was determined independently by each provider.

5. Reporting and Accountability

The reporting and accountability structure for welfare-to-work programs in San Antonio was similar to that found in the other two sites. Separate reporting forms and management information systems were maintained by each agency. Formal inter-agency reporting occurred from TEC to DHS and also from DEED and JTPA service providers to DHS. As part of its contractual relationship, TEC made monthly reports to DHS summarizing such statistics as the number of clients referred and registered, the number of clients entering employment, their characteristics and their wage rate. Reports to DHS from DEED were designed to provide only aggregate data on AFDC clients. Individual reports on REFOCUS referrals were prepared for DHS by JTPA service providers. It should be noted that discrepancies arose in the interviews as to the formal reporting mechanisms, thereby making it unclear as to who reported to whom and exactly what was reported. In the absence of formal reporting mechanisms, the exchange of information between agencies was not described as an everyday occurrence. Few of the individuals interviewed stated that they had informal lines of communication into other agencies. DHS did, however, emphasize that "case managers are in contact with staff from resource agencies on a monthly basis in regards to follow-up on their clients" as a routine part of their schedule. By all appearances, the exchange of information was relegated to the transmittal of standardized client data or was most likely to occur at formally scheduled meetings such as the Educational Conference sponsored by DHS in June 1989.

Performance measures were for the most part intra-agency. With the exception of the TEC-DHS contract, joint agency performance standards did not exist. Although TEC was responsible to DHS contractually on a regional basis, the contract terms were more or less standardized across the state. These measures included an entered employment rate, an employment retention rate and a target wage level. While there were also numerous non-financial agreements between DHS and JTPA providers, these agreements did not address performance outcomes. Moreover, REFOCUS

did not establish standards for DHS performance. Although in-house data was collected, the factors which had been regularly used to measure local performance were dropped when REFOCUS began. JTPA, on the other hand, had clearly defined standards related to AFDC service levels and outcomes for its Title IIA programs, including provisions for incentives and sanctions.

While the emphasis on outcomes in REFOCUS and other welfare-to-work programs was substantial, it was distinctly different from the emphasis in the early 1980's of "get them a job, any job." This philosophical switch from a numbers-driven system to one focussing on long-term participant gains had a system-wide impact that will only increase with JOBS. In San Antonio, concern was evidenced that the philosophical switch had not fully transpired and that area programs had a ways to go before accountability focussing on long-term gains would be uniformly reflected in program offerings.

6. The Impact of REFOCUS and Other Initiatives

REFOCUS was the only identifiable welfare-to-work initiative in San Antonio with an impact on substantial numbers of AFDC clients. As in other sites, REFOCUS did not have a broad-based impact on the internal operations of other San Antonio agencies with the notable exception of TEC. REFOCUS effects were primarily confined to DHS, in that it changed the agency's own internal procedures for sorting, referring and arranging for employment-related services. The determination of who would receive such services and what type they would receive was substantially redefined. Under WIN Demo, DHS case workers focussed on immediate placements almost exclusively. REFOCUS changed their roles from an immediate outcome-oriented one to more of a pure social work role in which case management was the central focus surrounding the decisions actually being made by the client. As a program, REFOCUS did not substantially increase the resources available for serving the AFDC population.[104] Instead, it relied almost completely on external resources to acquire services for its clients — particularly JTPA. For TEC, the only other agency to be affected noticeably, REFOCUS dramatically changed its referral system and the types of clients seen by the staff. The affect on TEC was largely positive in that the overall number of referrals was reduced and the typical referral was now likely to be a more job-ready Category I client, the type of client TEC was traditionally better suited to serving.

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[104]The one-time appropriation for REFOCUS child care mentioned in the earlier section on state-level initiatives is the one exception.

As one of the first pilot sites, the San Antonio DHS staff had a much clearer perception of the basic pitfalls of REFOCUS. The lessons learned in San Antonio concerning the need for additional resources, the difficulties and need for on-going staff training, and implementing case management were a great help to later REFOCUS sites. Without the knowledge gained from the San Antonio experience, later sites such as El Paso might not have experienced the smooth(er) REFOCUS implementation that they did. For San Antonio, the benefit of REFOCUS lies in the fact that DHS and other agencies in the welfare-to-work network locally are now better able to identify their resources and needs in planning for and implementing JOBS.

7. The Nature and Degree of Coordination

To a large extent, planning for welfare-to-work programs in San Antonio appears to have been carried out by agencies acting autonomously — internally initiated and developed by each individual agency. Coordinated planning to the extent it existed, focussed more on disseminating plans as opposed to gathering or developing input for them. Inter-agency interaction centered on exchanges between executive-level administrators. Currently, the highly structured, inter-agency planning process for JOBS appears to have increased the level of coordination between agencies in two respects: agencies are entering the planning process at an earlier stage; and more agencies are participating or at least, have an increased awareness of area welfare-to-work programs.

The intake and eligibility problems that hindered coordination at the other sites were also found in San Antonio. Moreover, the absence of a centralized JTPA intake and referral system as found in El Paso or a model program such as I-365 in Houston, resulted in a more disconnected system for delivering welfare-to-work programs. The number of clients who actually entered JTPA as REFOCUS referrals was quite small. Most AFDC clients in JTPA — roughly three out of four — continue to be "walk-ins" and not direct REFOCUS referrals, even two years after the pilot effort started. An exception to this fragmentation is the co-location of TEC staff at DHS. Co-location was credited with increasing the number of DHS referrals to TEC that stayed in the system. Under JOBS, the employment services provided to the more job-ready clients will be awarded through a competitive bid process. It is not known whether co-location will take place in the future if the contract is awarded to an agency other than TEC.

Another program component that is in need of streamlining in San Antonio is assessment. Everyone does it and seems to feel they have the better mousetrap. Assessment in these programs is highly fragmented and appears duplicative. While the agencies appear to be in agreement that the scores resulting from the ABLE Screening Battery are misleading, it is still in use. Actions to

integrate the various independent assessments occurred mainly as corrective measures when disputes arose as to a client's abilities or a desired change in the DHS-prepared EDP. Linkages between assessments, the assessors and clients were missing.

Aside from WIN which ended in the early 1980s, case management is a relatively recent program component. Implementing REFOCUS case management in San Antonio was an arduous process that produced extremely beneficial insights for the later REFOCUS sites. Case management calls for skilled individuals capable of identifying clients' needs, as well as for a service provider network capable of meeting those needs. Both components were present to some degree in San Antonio. FSS case managers received training to acquire the necessary skills, and various employment and educational services were available through JTPA. However, the link between the two seems to have been missing.

In terms of actual program services, the picture is unclear. While AFDC clients were being served in San Antonio, they did not appear to be flowing smoothly along a well-structured path between agencies. Concern was evidenced that many programs attempted to be all things to all clients, diluting the quality of actual services delivered and adversely affecting participation in those programs that tried to provide more specific, tailored services. In San Antonio, program ownership seems to have impeded not only coordination, but also client flow. In general, programs were neither conceived nor implemented in a collaborative, community-oriented way, but tended to remain very much the exclusive domain of the initiating agency.

With few exceptions, the flow of communications in San Antonio adversely affected reporting and accountability, increasing the feeling of program isolation. During the San Antonio interviews, it was the exception for an agency, without direct prompting, to mention other agencies' services or accomplishments. In view of their decentralized system, it is possible that significant welfare-to-work efforts were not discovered because they were not widely discussed. This is especially troubling since several excellent programs such as those at SAC and SER were observed.

In spite of the tensions and turf issues encountered in San Antonio, local staff (opinions) generally described the level of coordination as ranking at the top of the scale. This, it should be noted, was in direct contrast to staff opinions at the other two sites who graded themselves much lower. The San Antonio staffs described the level of coordination as ranging from "good" to "very high." While this may be debatable relative to other sites, there is definitely evidence of inter-agency contact and a number of joint activities. And, the level of awareness in San Antonio is high in terms of the issues that need to be resolved (e.g., "letting go" of the turf battles). However, the

underlying environment did not appear to be conducive to building mutual trust and fostering collaborative programs. When compared with the other sites, the overall commitment to coordinated activity in San Antonio simply seems to have been diverted towards own-agency efforts.

VI. Summary and Implications

This section summarizes findings and major implications from the first round of site visits examining coordination in welfare-to-work programs in Texas. Again, it is worth reiterating that these visits were exploratory in nature. They were explicitly designed to elicit information on local coordination activity in programs ranging from JTPA and TEC to local education entities and, of course, DHS. Information from these initial visits was also intended to help shape the approach to measuring coordination and its effectiveness and to enhance the more quantitative analysis to be performed subsequently. The site work presented here was designed to probe for both what is known and what is possible to know about welfare-to-work coordination locally.

This report was not intended to be and does not constitute a comprehensive evaluation of programs operating in El Paso, Houston and San Antonio. Instead, it focuses on the nature and extent of coordination among programs in each of those areas from 1985-1989, basically the pre-JOBS period. The findings reported here are the result of a structured examination of state and local documents as well as extensive interviews with staff from nearly all agencies and programs at both levels over a period of several months. Considerable judgement has been exercised by the researchers in assembling and weighing the information used here.

A. Summary of Findings

STATE-LEVEL INITIATIVES

At the state level there appears to have been increasing coordination initiated from virtually all agencies involved in welfare-to-work programs during the 1985-1989 period. The Governor's Office, the Texas Legislature, JTPA, DHS, TEC, TEA and the Texas SJTCC have all played substantive roles in one initiative or another. There are probably others as well. While it is difficult to determine whether this activity was greater or more intense than that in earlier periods

— e.g., the WIN program of the 1970s and early 1980s — there can be no denying the presence of genuine state efforts to promote coordination in this policy and program area. Particular examples of state-initiated efforts which stand out include:

- The JTPA/DHS (State-Level) Coordination Agreements, the first of which was signed after months of DHS-JTPA negotiation in 1985;
- The JTPA/AFDC Enhancement Projects which began in late 1986 at the initiation of JTPA and the Texas SJTCC;
- Mandatory DHS PIC Representation, which became effective in 1987 through an amendment to the Texas Job Training Partnership Act of 1983;
- REFOCUS, the DHS initiative for AFDC recipients which was conceived in late 1987, entered its pilot phase in Spring 1988, and was fully implemented statewide in December 1989; and
- The AFDC Job Search Workshops, implemented by TEC offices in selected areas of the state with Wagner-Peyser Governors' Discretionary (7b) funds, offering enhanced job search assistance to AFDC recipients.

Other state initiatives occurred in this time period as well and are described in Section IV. However, those listed here probably had effects over a broader area of the state than the others. Some actually became effective late in 1989 or saw the light of day in early 1990 (i.e., the Joint AFDC/JTPA Eligibility Policy and TEC's adoption of a case management approach). These efforts can be expected to produce results down the road. The state-level initiatives listed above have had varying effects.

First, taken together these initiatives have begun to create an environment among the various agencies and programs supportive of planning and operating more collaborative programs for welfare recipients. They constitute an emerging statement of intent concerning cooperation and coordination based on the actions of key players in the arena from the Governor and the Legislature as well as the interested agencies. In addition, they have also served as catalytic agents for forging lasting relationships among the staff — executive-level and others — from these agencies who carry the responsibility for policy and program implementation in the programs. These relationships appear to be bearing fruit in at least two of the three sites visited for this report, Houston and El Paso. They should also provide part of the necessary basis for successfully launching JOBS.

Second, the AFDC Job Search Workshops which have been offered around the state seem to have been instrumental in getting TEC back into the welfare arena with more solid standing. Since the coming of WIN Demo in the early 1980s, TEC had lost its joint administrative role at the state level and its local role had devolved into merely being another services-for-pay contractor. TEC is a DHS contractor for both Category I REFOCUS clients and for Food Stamp job search services as well in large areas of the state. But, it is difficult if not impossible to be a significant player in this program area without having at least some stake of their own. The use of Wagner-Peyser 7b funds — even though they have been more tightly controlled through the Governor's Office in recent years — enhanced TEC's role.[105]

Third, the legislative mandate to have DHS representatives on every PIC, coupled with the activity surrounding REFOCUS and the institution of the joint AFDC/JTPA eligibility and referral policy, has also created a greater impetus for inter-agency coordination activity in these programs. DHS now has a significantly enhanced role in the planning and operations of JTPA programs at both the state and local level compared to earlier periods. Just as JTPA actors have been represented on various DHS planning bodies at the state and regional levels (e.g., the state CSS Advisory Council), DHS now actively participates in JTPA planning and oversight from the SJTCC at the state level down to each of the 34 local PICs in Texas.[106]

Finally, by itself, REFOCUS seems to have had only marginal effects on the operations of the other programs. While REFOCUS has been useful for DHS in preparing for JOBS and has definitely begun the process of reorienting FSS, IA and other staff toward a more pro-active, self-sufficiency mission for its programs, JTPA and TEC have had only limited involvement in planning for REFOCUS and their own program operations have been affected to varying degrees. The flow of clients from DHS has typically been reduced somewhat by REFOCUS in the early stages. TEC has been affected more so than JTPA in that they serve in a direct contractual capacity for DHS. TEC now appears to be serving fewer, slightly more job-ready clients. Welfare recipients make up a substantial share — around 17-18 percent — of JTPA participants statewide, but REFOCUS referrals appear to account for only 20-25 percent of AFDC recipients served even after two years of experience in the early implementation sites.[107] Interaction between DHS and

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[105]This role may be jeopardized in the future by DHS' competitive procurement of FY1991 employment services for Service Level I clients in which TEC lost out to both private contractors and others. In the major urban markets which account for a large share of the State's AFDC caretakers, TEC has been relegated to by-stander status.

[106]Now 35 with the addition of Collin County in July 1990.

[107]DHS figures for the period March through October 1989 indicate that REFOCUS accounted for 28.3 percent of the AFDC clients served in JTPA in El Paso, 48.3 percent in San Antonio, and 41.5 percent in Houston. However, these figures should definitely be viewed as outer-bound estimates of REFOCUS/JTPA penetration, since DHS counts individuals as REFOCUS clients in JTPA if they were ever profiled for service and if they were ever served in

other programs may be slightly more frequent due to REFOCUS, but as long as most welfare recipients enroll in JTPA on their own, its impact will continue to be marginal.

LOCAL SITES

One of the striking features of these programs is their diversity. TEC and DHS employment services programs have historically tended to be state controlled and directed systems with notable local variation. Education has always been largely a system of locally autonomous programs operating within state guidelines. In spite of the enhanced role for the governor since JTPA's passage in 1982, job training remains a system with substantial area-to-area variation. Brief site-specific overviews are provided, followed by a summary of findings by major program function. In each site, the focus was almost exclusively on the site's urban county. Rural coordination issues will be examined in later site visits in this project.

El Paso. At one end of the spectrum, El Paso's welfare-related programs were highly centralized across the board except for education. Even JTPA is run by the PIC as mainly an in-house program, a model which tends to be the exception in Texas and most parts of the country. Moreover, there was remarkable consensus among El Paso agencies and programs on the basic mission of these efforts for the welfare population. This consensus and the obvious ease of the working relationships appear to have been facilitated to a great extent by the continuity of key staff in the agencies here. Key actors from all of these programs and a number of their local support service providers (e.g., the YWCA) have been in place for over a decade and in some cases much longer.

El Paso seems to have evolved into what has been referred earlier as a *community of agencies* in so far as welfare-to-work efforts are concerned. As a site, it was very much a place by itself. The level of commitment and trust between programs ran high, and there was a noticeable absence of politics and turf in the interviews and discussions. It may be just a humorous quip, but several individuals pointed out that El Paso was closer to the capitals of New Mexico and Arizona than of Texas. The messages picked up were uniformly consistent from one agency and program to the next as well. The programs here have long pitched in on numerous coordinated initiatives of their own to make their limited resources stretch and to deliver effective services to clients in need. In addition, joint, in-depth assessment seems to be key to their success. Coordination among programs for welfare recipients has become something program staff just do each day as part of their jobs. REFOCUS and other state initiatives have been absorbed into this basic environment in

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JTPA during the period. See: DHS Program and Budget Management, Statistical Report on REFOCUS, April 1988 - June 1990, Austin: DHS, August 28, 1990. This report is based on data processed through July 31, 1990.

El Paso. In terms of the coordination framework, El Paso was into aspects of shared control and was working towards program integration in a number of respects.

Houston. Programs functioned in a far more decentralized setting in Houston with the notable exception of Project Independence 365, the joint JTPA/DHS initiative serving primarily more motivated welfare recipients. Houston presented a large, complex environment in every respect, not just for welfare-to-work programs, making coordination and consensus-building difficult. However, despite turnover in the ranks of key DHS actors in Houston, there has been sufficient staff continuity between I-365 and REFOCUS to assemble and maintain an inter-agency group committed to more collaborative welfare-employment programs. Houston also has developed a number of home-grown initiatives for this population — including I-365, several TEC projects and recent efforts in the schools. Welfare-to-work program coordination appeared to be going fairly well in Houston. Both I-365 and REFOCUS represented sincere attempts by these agencies to work collaboratively to deliver effective services for AFDC recipients.[108] To the extent that there are problems with coordination here, program staff ascribe them to bureaucratic rules and procedures imposed by the state (e.g., documentation requirements for case managers). The local staff seemed to be doing well in the context of their overall environment. Houston is probably too large, too decentralized and too connected to developments in the rest of the state to attain the rarified sense of community enjoyed in El Paso. Houston seemed to be somewhere beyond active consultation on the coordination continuum, making use of some dimensions of shared control in its programs.

San Antonio. Like Houston, the programmatic environment in San Antonio was very decentralized. At the time of the site visits, the prevailing atmosphere here — radiating from the elected officials and city hall down to the program administrators — seemed unfortunately to be one of uncertainty and turmoil. With the exception of TEC, there has been large-scale turnover in key positions in the major programs throughout the period examined, with detrimental effects on San Antonio's capacity to launch and effectively participate in collaborative pilot efforts such as REFOCUS. Unlike the other sites, communication flow here seemed to be stilted and uneven. While there have been genuine attempts to build the capacity for more effectively serving welfare recipients — e.g., the two Learning Centers — San Antonio does not have the history of collaborative local initiatives found elsewhere. San Antonio's welfare-to-work programs might best be characterized as approaching the far left end of the continuum — sharing some but not necessarily the most relevant information — despite two full years of REFOCUS experience and

[108]Project I-365 has been phased out. It has evolved into another JTPA/DHS effort, a joint client assessment center to serve welfare recipients.

considerable early success. The underlying environment did not appear conducive to building mutual trust and real commitment to collaborative programming. The tendency was largely towards own-agency rather than inter-agency effort. Even so, there were providers in San Antonio serving welfare clients well (e.g., SER and others). But, they seemed to be doing so more in spite of state and local efforts than because of them. In all fairness, it should be pointed out that San Antonio — along with Houston and Beaumont, the other two pilot sites — served as REFOCUS learning labs. The later implementation sites benefited from both their successes and their failures.

One of the interesting ironies to come out of the site visits was that collective staff opinion concerning the status of coordination in their localities were generally at odds with the researchers' appraisal. El Paso staff as a whole sensed that they were doing only moderately well in coordinating their efforts and indicated that they had a long way yet to go. The Houston program staff generally gave their efforts a hard time, characterizing coordination there as poor ("so so"), despite their considerable progress in recent years. San Antonio staff roundly gave high marks to their program coordination efforts, a view which is difficult to reconcile with the reality of their situation. This puzzling set of views probably says a great deal about the value of self-assessment, as well as about the commitment to running open, collaborative programs for AFDC recipients in these sites.

PROGRAM FUNCTIONS

Planning. In all sites, there seemed to be more collaborative planning going on for welfare-to-work programs, especially between DHS and JTPA. TEC still was dealt with more as a possible contractor than as an engaged partner in the process, and education was only minimally involved as a rule through 1989. There are issues of the point at which coordinated planning occurred. That is, were plans for REFOCUS (and other related initiatives locally) full blown before JTPA and TEC were apprised of them or were those systems actively involved from the outset? This is a question which is easier to ask than to answer. With JOBS, planning efforts in these sites to date seemed to be reaching out to involve more actors earlier in the process.[109]

Intake and Eligibility Determination. To a large extent, REFOCUS can be viewed as an attempt to rationalize the intake and referral process for AFDC clients to be served by JTPA, TEC and education programs. In the past, the entire process — including determining eligibility for JTPA — was very unstructured. REFOCUS had only limited effect on client flow in these sites.

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[109]Planning for JOBS implementation was underway in all of these sites and throughout most of the state as our interviews were being conducted. JOBS planning is being done as an inter-agency, tops-down/bottoms-up process involving a broad array of related agencies in each DHS region and locality.

Most AFDC recipients participating in JTPA have continued to be non-REFOCUS "walk-ins" or clients directly recruited from local welfare offices by service providers. A large part of the problem is that DHS has lacked the resources to hire sufficient numbers of intake workers and case managers to keep the referrals coming steadily to the other systems. Of the three sites, El Paso had by far the best coordinated intake and referral mechanism for AFDC clients, largely because the PIC centralized the function and has developed an efficient eligibility documentation approach in conjunction with DHS. Even so, "walk-ins" have dominated direct REFOCUS referrals in El Paso as well. While TEC has tended to serve as a DHS employment contractor, it has developed mechanisms (including staff co-location in Houston and San Antonio) for smoothing the intake and referral process and better client retention. The intake and referral process for AFDC clients remained a large coordination problem.

Client Assessment. In many respects, assessment is the one of the most, if not the most, crucial element of welfare-employment programs. After several years' experience under REFOCUS, staff from most of the agencies were unhappy with the current approach to testing and assessing clients. The combination of a quick initial screening, sorting clients into three categories and follow-up assessment of selected clients (Category or Service Level II clients) using the ABLE Screening Battery has not done the job. Non-DHS program staff felt that Category I clients as defined by DHS could not be viewed as job ready (within six months); most were indistinguishable from Category II clients and very much in need of further assessment and case management services. The ABLE Screening Battery tended to be dismissed because it overstated client functioning levels by 1.5 to 2.0 grade levels.

However, some of the best examples of local program coordination stemmed from efforts to assess clients. Project I-365 in Houston approached assessment as a true team effort with their "staffings" and generated considerable staff rapport as a result, blending staff identities into a whole on-site. El Paso took their long-standing emphasis on assessment and included co-located DHS staff as well as assigned case managers in their process: assessment is truly the primary driver for El Paso's programs, for all participants not just those who happen to be welfare clients. In these two sites, assessment results also tended to be shared effectively among the programs. Despite efforts to improve client assessment, San Antonio continued to struggle unsuccessfully, except on a provider-by-provider basis.

Case Management. Case management was once an integral part of welfare-employment programs under the early WIN — not the 1980s WIN Demo — version. DHS reintroduced this program component for selected AFDC clients in REFOCUS, basically the Category II clients with modest educational deficits, recent work experience and no other significant barriers to

employment. Experience with case management under REFOCUS has varied in these sites. El Paso has had the best experience to date and has not developed noticeable queues of clients-in-waiting; it is not clear how much this is a reflection of smaller numbers generally and the fact that it implemented the program nearly a year after the other sites. Moreover, many of the Upper Rio Grande PIC staff were certified counselors and essentially functioned as *de facto* case managers. San Antonio has had a real struggle with the case management component given its staff turnover, while Houston has enjoyed real success at least in Project I-365. Houston has been frustrated with case management as it has operated under DHS documentation rules. The shortage of DHS case management resources has continued to be a problem affecting these programs in many respects, ranging from intake and referral to the provision of follow-up services. Some of the PIC staffs even considered going their own way in the future — i.e., hiring their own case managers — to facilitate serving welfare and their other hard-to-serve populations.

Program Services. With the exception of El Paso's programs and Houston's Project Independence 365 — which was admittedly for the "cream" of those Category II clients who met additional eligibility criteria — the system of program services for AFDC clients was fragmented at best. Beginning with the dominance of "walk-ins" and recruits over REFOCUS referrals in all sites and moving through the highly decentralized system of service providers in two of the three sites, what emerged was a fragmented picture. This was particularly true from the client's vantage point.

TEC has been actively engaged in welfare-to-work efforts in a number of instances (e.g, the ACT II initiative and I-365 in Houston, and co-location efforts in San Antonio), but for the most part played the role of an employment services contractor for Category I REFOCUS clients in each of the sites. In Project I-365, TEC also performed major testing and counseling functions under contract to the Houston PIC. Aside from 7b-funded Job Search Workshops, TEC has simply not had the financial wherewithal to do more than provide basic labor exchange services for welfare recipients.

The lack of reliable support services funding — for child care and transportation — to date has also presented problems for these programs. JTPA has tended to fill the void in El Paso and Houston. Similar efforts have been tried in San Antonio, although unsuccessfully due to apparent administrative and political conflicts within JTPA and elsewhere. The willingness of these PICs to take on the support services role is admirable and certainly demonstrates that their hearts (and pocketbooks) are in the right place, but there is a real question whether it is appropriate to use their limited training dollars this way. Hopefully, with added in-program child care funding under

JOBS, DHS can fulfill this role and allow PICs to redirect their monies to expanding training offerings.

Reporting and Accountability. The systems for reporting and accountability were generally in the developmental stage, with a few exceptions. TEC served AFDC clients under contract and had to keep tabs of program participants in order to get paid. And, clients participating in JTPA programs automatically were wrapped into the JTPA MIS and performance management provisions. Thus, many AFDC recipients served as participants have been covered by some form of reporting and subjected to a modicum of accountability. In addition, in Project I-365, joint efforts were made to coordinate the forms and systems for reporting client progress with some success. However, for the most part, these efforts have been program-specific and largely uncoordinated, a situation which will need much improvement to handle JOBS reporting and participation requirements.[110]

B. Implications

Before pursuing the implications of some of these findings, it is important to recall that the interactions between the various programs serving welfare recipients are considerable. Both TEC and JTPA are now and have been serving substantial numbers of AFDC clients. In JTPA's case, most local PICs are serving far greater numbers of welfare clients than is required by law. Thus, the core issues relate more to whom and how rather than to how many persons are being served.

Three sets of implications are offered here based on a survey of the coordination literature and on the extensive interviews conducted with both state agency and local program staffs in the three sites during 1990. The first set relates to welfare-employment programs generally. The second is directed to the imminent implementation of JOBS in Texas (October 1, 1990). The final set deals with the implications of this early field work on the measurement and analysis of program coordination and its impact. First, the following general implications are offered:

- Mandating effective program coordination from the federal or state level is impossible. Unless conditions happen to be right, mandating coordination would probably be like pushing on a very heavy object with a limp rope. Yet, it should be possible to direct local programs to engage in activities associated with operating

[110] A state DHS workgroup is now exploring this issue, but most of the local agency and provider staff we interviewed were largely unaware of the reporting and recordkeeping demands JOBS would soon be making on their existing systems.

more effective and efficient programs for welfare recipients. The trick lies in determining which activities are associated with better programs and in implementing policies which will produce them.

- Also, policies on coordination should be sensitive to variations in local conditions. In areas which already have well coordinated programs and an existing foundation of mutual trust, requiring greater and more specific coordination behaviors may well be counterproductive; the best state policies in this case simply support and nurture what is already in place and otherwise stay well out of the way. In areas without such relationships, additional coordination activity might be directed and tracked over time. Positive reinforcement will typically produce better results than more negative approaches. For example, the provision of joint (interagency) technical assistance on effective program models is preferred to monitoring reports on the insufficient numbers of joint staff meetings taking place.

- Based on the initial site visits, areas which may need greater attention in terms of coordination include: the intake and referral process; client assessment; and program reporting and accountability.

Second, looking towards JOBS implementation, the following are offered:

- One of the critical factors affecting the relations between welfare-employment programs is the lack of resources, particularly on the DHS side. REFOCUS has represented a sincere attempt to rationalize the process of sorting and referring AFDC clients to other programs for services. But, there have been too few program staff — particularly case managers — to do the job well. It should be no surprise that non-REFOCUS clients have substantially outnumbered REFOCUS clients participating in JTPA. Moreover, it is unclear whether JTPA can or should continue to fill the in-program child care void which has been left by DHS when JOBS comes on-line. Many Texas PICs have been using scarce training dollars to provide child care and other support services to ensure welfare clients' participation in training. This leads to questions about the underlying basis for lasting JTPA/DHS relationships in those areas.

- JOBS ultimately increases the ante for states (e.g., participation requirements, target group restrictions, mandated transitional benefits), making it much more important to operate effective welfare-to-work programs. States are now potentially liable for

off-spell costs for former recipients, such that the long-term cost of an inexpensive but ineffective treatment may be substantially greater than before. Client assessment needs greater emphasis in all programs, and a coordinated assessment strategy makes sense. Each system — welfare, training, etc. — presently performs some form of client assessment. Better assessment should also help to produce less fragmented service delivery for these clients and their families.

And, finally, there are important implications for the subsequent stages of this research which will attempt to measure and analyze the impact of program coordination, including:

- Measuring coordination is complex, in part because coordination behavior is nonlinear and very likely depends on the level of trust and maturity in the interagency program relationships which have been established over a period of years. At first, when agencies with a history of little interaction or low basic trust levels begin to attempt to coordinate, large investments of staff time at all levels may be called for, not to mention mountains of paper laying out the bases and conditions for the new relationships. However, as the program relationship matures and trust develops, greater coordination might actually take place while interagency contact declines. At this time, there is no well-established framework for determining where on such an interagency program maturity scale local programs are.

- Also, the focus for this report has been on examining coordination relationships primarily at the level of the key local welfare, employment or training entity. For DHS and TEC, this presents no real problem. However, for JTPA particularly, the analysis is not as clear cut. Organizational relationships and approaches to allocating funds and delivering services differ markedly from area to area in the JTPA system, as these sites have amply demonstrated. The PIC in El Paso essentially was the primary training service provider, while both the Houston and San Antonio PICs largely allocated their training funds to a host of service providers who served clients as contractors. It is a much more straightforward proposition to measure and document coordination among players at the same level in a community than it is to unravel those same relationships between numerous players at different levels. When applied to a decentralized system, this type of approach may not uncover pockets of coordination.

- In part, this suggests that the measurement and analysis of coordination's impact on welfare and labor market outcomes in the work to follow may need to rely on a

strategy of sorting the data into time periods based on the presence/absence or likely degree of program coordination occurring. In addition, it should be possible to use some sites, for which much more is known about specific coordination activities and levels historically, as control sites in the analysis. Later reports will deal with these measurement issues in great detail.

C. Next Steps

The next project report, the JTPA/Welfare Coordination Evaluation: Baseline Analysis Report, will be available in early 1991. It will be based on an extensive statistical analysis of data from DHS, JTPA and TEC programs, including data from TEC's Unemployment Insurance Wage Records files covering participants' employment and earnings. It will provide state and local area findings on welfare spells and duration, as well as on labor market outcomes from these programs using multiple years of data.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TEXAS JTPA/Welfare Coordination
INTERVIEW GUIDE: Outline
Preliminary Site Visits

I. INTRODUCTION

II. PERSONAL BACKGROUND/POSITION

III. WELFARE COORDINATION INITIATIVES: OVERVIEW

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

V. PROGRAM GOALS & OBJECTIVES

VI. REFOCUS START-UP

VII. INTRA- and INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL INTERACTION

- Intra-Organizational
- Inter-Organizational

VIII. CLIENT FLOW

IX. INTAKE AND ORIENTATION

X. CASE MANAGEMENT

XI. ASSESSMENT

XII. EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING & EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

- Employment & Training
- Education

XIII. SUPPORT SERVICES

- Child Care
- Transportation
- Other Support Services

XIV. REPORTING & PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY

XV. OPINIONS ON COORDINATION

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

EL PASO

EL PASO COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Young Parent Program
- Sue Pratt-Bissell, Coordinator

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Client Self-Support, Employment Services
- Gary Frederick, Regional Director
- Luis Macias, Program Director
- Freddie Johnson, PIC Liaison Worker

Client Self-Support, Eligibility
- Tony Ortiz, Regional Director
- Ralph Briones, Program Director

Purchased Services
- Walter Delnes, Regional Director

TEXAS EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION
- William Valls, Office Manager
- Felipe (Phil) Chacon, Refocus Supervisor

UPPER RIO GRANDE PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL
- Norm Haley, Executive Vice President
- Joe Reinman, Supervisor (Senior Counselor)
- Bertha Mejia, Liaison (AFDC) Counselor
- Dwight Culvert, YPP Liaison

UPPER RIO GRANDE REGIONAL PLANNING COOPERATIVE
- Otis Burnett, Research Analyst

YWCA OF EL PASO
- Kathleen Barber, Associate Executive Director of Programs

HOUSTON

HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM
Industrial Education Division
- John Brown, Chairman
- Brenda Cambrice, Liaison

HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
- Ava Ponce, Director of JTPA Programs

HOUSTON JOB TRAINING PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL
- Terry Hudson, Executive Director
- Bill Whitlow, Manager of Contract Administration
- Robin Fernkas, Administrative Assistant/Project I-365 Liaison
- Russell Tomlin, Excel Program Manager

HOUSTON JOB TRAINING PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL, cont.

Project Independence 365

- Paulette Wellington, Trainer
- Wilson Celestine, GED Coordinator
- Hilda Murillo, Intake Interviewer

KAY ON-GOING EDUCATION CENTER

- Celestine Barnes, Principal

(THE) NEXT STEP, INC.

- Bennie Elmore, Executive Director

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

- Mamie Ewing, Regional Administrator

Client Self-Support, Employment Services

- Sandra Massey, Site Coordinator
- John Menger, Supervisor

Project Independence 365

- Antoinette Branch, Trainer
- Wonishet Andarge, Senior Case Manager
- Johnnie Davis, Case Manager
- Amara Wong, Case Manager

TEXAS EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION

- Robert (Dale) Hopson, Program Manager

Project Independence 365

- Faye Good, Counselor
- Velossia Ann Ledet, Assessment/Job Search Counselor

SAN ANTONIO

ALAMO PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL

- Erick Akins, Acting Executive Director

CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

Deparment of Economic and Employment Development

- Belvin Steward, Job Training Coordinator

SAN ANTONIO COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- Richard Oliver, Director of Academic Support Services

SER, JOBS FOR PROGRESS, INC.

- Jack Waldron, Director of Program Operations

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Client Self-Support, Employment Services

- Barbara Ford Young, Regional Director
- Joseph Holterman, (Former) Program Director

Client Self-Support, Eligibility

- Linda Franco, Regional Director

TEXAS EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION

- Carlos Contreras, Regional Director
- Elvira Cotton, Area Manager

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